COMMENTARY

A DIALOGUE OF TWO HISTORIES

"Jewish Contributions to America" in a New Light

DANIEL J. BOORSTIN

APOLOGISTS of Judaism in recent years, in a frenetic search for identities, have dulled their vision of what is distinctive in either the Jewish or the American experience. While apologists of other cultural minorities have been eager to show that they have something unique to add, too many Jewish spokesmen (haunted by the specter of anti-Semitism) have been more anxious to prove the Jewish title to a share in American culture than to show how they are qualified to enrich it. Yet the capacity of Jews to contribute to American civilization is by no means proportionate to the affinity of traditional Judaism with "real" Americanism. Indeed, those who would equate "Judaism" with "Americanism," by the very terms of their argument may well prevent the discovery of any fruitful relation between cultures. They are actually not so much concerned with cultures as with orthodoxies; their search is for an authoritative and rigid dogma.

A fertile encounter between Jewish and American culture must be historically and not dogmatically defined. We must not seek the tenets of any dominant creed; we must look rather for what is characteristic of each of two historical experiences. We must be willing to face their true diversity, and even to make that diversity the measure of what the two have to say to each other. Cultures, we must remember, are not characterized by dogmas, but by assumptions or emphases; not by creeds to be defended, but by possibilities to be explored. They are more like responsive personalities than consistent systems of thought. Inevitably, their relationship will contain tensions; to be a living relationship it must contain tensions. Among cultures it is often the marriage of opposites that is the happiest and the most fruitful.

If we examine the large features of the Jewish, as distinguished from the American, historical experience, I believe we will discover the materials for just such a dynamic tension. The dramatic contrast between the two will not only help us discover the kind of dialogue which can exist between our two experiences and traditions, but may even help us define the mission of Jews on this

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AMERICAN Jewish thinkers, concerned with demonstrating Jewish contributions to America, have stressed likenesses and identities: culture-bearers, like blood donors, presumably must be of the same "type." DANIEL BOORSTIN here presents the provocative thesis that the happiest and most fruitful marriages may well be those of differing, contrasting "cultural personalities." Professor Boorstin is associate professor of American civilization in the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago. He is the author of two books, *The Mysterious Science of the Law* and *The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson.*

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continent. The American and the Jewish historical experiences, we will find, differ at least with respect to: (a) dimension, (b) arena, and (c) orientation.

THE difference of chronological *dimension* is perhaps the most obvious. While the American is the most precocious of living Western cultures, the Jewish is the most venerable. The history of culture in the United States extends over a period of three hundred years at the most; Jewish history (even if dated only from the departure from Egypt circa 1445 BCE) is at least ten times that long. The whole of American history could be confined in the chronological boundaries of a single chapter of Jewish history. The period from the age of Hillel to the writing down of the Babylonian Talmud is approximately twice the length of all American history.

A result has been a striking difference of attitude toward time: in this the Jewish and the American views have been polar opposites. The brevity of the American past has led to a failure to give due importance to the whole human inheritance, and to a readiness to attach disproportionate importance to any one man or generation. "The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles," boasted Crèvecoeur in the era of the Revolution, "he must therefore entertain new ideas, and form new opinions." In a Brave New World Americans have been eager to see man in heroic nakedness. And man stripped of his institutionl and traditional inheritance seems a mere biological creature. The classic formulation of this emphasis in political theory is found in Jeffersonian political thought, resting as it does on a materialist anthropology, defending the equality of men by their common membership in the species *Homo sapiens*, and maintaining the superiority of political life in America because this continent lacks an institutional past.

What has seemed to characterize man in America has not been new American garments so much as his new opportunity to see his unadorned beauty. In Whitman's words we hear a theme which reappears in many unexpected places in American culture, from Jefferson and Jackson through Theodore Roosevelt, John Dewey, and Ruth Benedict.

I sing the body electric. . . .
The swimmer naked in the swimming-bath, seen as he swims through the transparent green-shine, or lies with his face up and rolls silently to and fro in the heave of the water. . . .
The wrestle of wrestlers, two apprentice-boys, quite grown, lusty, good-natured, native-born, out on the vacant lot at sundown after work. . . .
The march of firemen in their own costumes, the play of masculine muscle through clean-setting trowsers and waist-straps. . . .
Swim with the swimmers, wrestle with wrestlers, march in line with the firemen, and pause, listen, count.
O my body! I dare not desert the likes of you in other men and women, nor the likes of the parts of you.

But the Jew, least of all men, can believe in the nakedness of man: the past is forced on him—if not inwardly, at least by society. Perforce he has a historical orientation. Even his God (as the Rabbi in Halevi's *Kuzari* insisted) is a historical figure, identified by actual past accomplishments, "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who brought our fathers forth from the land of bondage." The Bible of Judaism is replete with begats and the careers of generations.

IN AMERICA, of all commodities the most precious has been *time*. It has been one of the few strikingly scarce commodities in our national history. Colonial history was a race among European nations for control of the continent; recent American history has been a race among individuals and corporations for a continent's treasure. Nor is it surprising that Americans should be impatient; since time does not stretch back endlessly into the national past, it seems unlikely to stretch endlessly into the future. But for the Jew time has been abundant. In Veblen's phrase, the Jewish mind bears the date-mark BC.

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According to the familiar story, when Bismarck confronted the French with his bill for reparations after the Franco-Prussian War, they complained that to pay such an amount would take them more years than had elapsed since the birth of Jesus. Bismarck replied (pointing to the Jew Gerson Bleichröder), that that was why he had brought with him a man whose people started their calendar not from the birth of Jesus, but from the creation of the world.

The disparity of chronological dimension has contributed to a difference of attitude toward the intelligibility of history, if not of all experience. The beginning of the United States—not so many decades ago—is a story rich in facts: we know by name and even by portrait many of the earliest settlers, and when and why they came here. Our republic was formed at a precise and historical period. The destination of American history has appeared equally plain, for optimism and a belief in progress have made the present age seem to us (as it did to John Winthrop, Benjamin Franklin, and Calvin Coolidge) the culmination of the past. The peculiar American version of destiny has been "*manifest* destiny," with clarity its hallmark. The American past contains few, if any, mythical characters.

American history could then be described as "closed" at both ends: both origin and destination appear fixed. In contrast Jewish history is open at both ends. The creation of the Jewish people is shrouded in twilight; the mystery of Jewish destiny has been its authentic stamp. God made the beginning and the end, and only His back are we permitted to see. The creation of the world merges indefinitely into the creation of the Law and the mystery of truth.

The Lord made me as the beginning of His way,
The first of His works of old.
I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,
Or ever the earth was.
When there were no depths, I was brought forth;
When there were no fountains abounding with water. . . .
Then I was by Him, as a nursling;
And I was daily all delight,
Playing always before Him,
Playing in His habitable earth,
And my delights are with the sons of men.
(Proverbs, 8:22 ff.)

The mystery of the Beginning is paralleled by the mystery of the End, expressed in a Messiah who is certain to come, is always about to come, yet whose coming is always in the future.

To see history *sub specie Americani* is to be encouraged in an excessive (if well substantiated) optimism. Jews, viewing history *sub specie aeternitatis,* incline to pessimism, however much tinged by Zionistic utopianism. For Americans, America *is* Zion; but for Jews even the achievement of a Jewish state does not make Zion attained.

IN THE *arena* of historical experience we find a contrast no less dramatic: the characteristic arena of American history has been *nature,* while that of Jewish history has been *society*. The epic of American history is the conquest of a continent, unprecedented in rapidity and thoroughness. It is a tale of Man against Nature. Crossing mountain ranges, irrigating deserts, digging gold and silver, discovering and extracting oil, cutting down forests—such achievements have marked the history of the United States. We look in vain for works of this type in the history of the Jewish people, at least until the present generation. The crossing of the Red Sea is perhaps the last event of Jewish history of a peculiarly American grandeur, and even that was not accomplished by Jewish engineers.

But on a scale no less grand than that of American history, Jewish history has shown man in society. Its impressive accomplishment has been social: the survival and the actual development of a culture in the midst of peoples who have despised it. As American history has revealed with unique magnificence man's ability to adapt himself to varied

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physical environments and to exploit nature, Jewish history has revealed his potentialities for survival among other men, however different from him they may have been or have thought themselves to be. The Jewish experience has been the survival of a community among communities, in a Babylonian captivity or among the Marranos. It is understandable that American folk-heroes should be Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, and Paul Bunyan, men clever with their hands, able to hew a forest or strangle a mountain lion, while Jewish folk-heroes are Moses, Elijah, and Judas Maccabaeus.

The emphasis on exploration and control of the natural environment has helped produce an American pre-eminence in technology which has its counterpart in the Jewish achievement in ethics. Public education in America has been preoccupied with *useful* knowledge; Jewish education (partly because so many avenues of usefulness have been closed to Jews, partly because of the non-naturalistic temper of Jewish thought) has been interested in the eternal meaning of the Law. The urgent practical tasks of American civilization have made the convenient concept of law as an ethical minimum flourish here with unprecedented vigor. It has seemed particularly important that men be left free to do as they wish in every area not explicitly covered by the law. While this has nourished the libertarian tradition and a healthful disrespect of bureaucracy, it has also helped engender a bewildering multiplicity of statutes. At the opposite pole is the Jewish conception of every man's "legal" duty to *exceed* the demands of law.

The naturalistic arena has made American life conspicuously poor in ritual and has nourished an extraordinary directness and explicitness in approaching the problems of national life. While Jews have never ceased to seek a definition of a Jew (without ever expecting to find one), Americans for decades have been ready with oaths and pledges of allegiance, loyalty and sedition tests, and courses in citizenship supposed to make true Americans in short order. The very brevity of American history and the diversity of origin of Americans have required a doubly explicit reassurance of national identity. The Fourth of July has been celebrated by the Oration, in which a public figure exhorts his audience to loyalty and public virtue; the Passover (the analogous Jewish holiday) is marked by prayer, ritual, music, and symbol. The sermon, which has thus become secularized and acquired a prominent place in American political life, has played a small role in the Jewish religious experience.

In America, the pressure of physical problems and the greatness of economic rewards, together with the variety of traditions which have sought to live together, have nourished a willingness—even an eagerness—to minimize differences of ideas. This has amounted often to a tendency to undervalue ideas themselves. Who would spend his energy on metaphysics with a virgin continent before him? As Benjamin Rush urged in the early 19th century, Americans dared not be so foolish as to turn their backs upon a gold mine in order to go chasing butterflies. But history has imposed on Jews an opposite necessity: having been denied ground to conquer, they could not be united by a task of conquest, and instead have had to seek community through ideas.

If men coming to this continent have had nothing else, they have had land (at least until recently), and plenty of it, which they could call their own. In this sense the history of the United States has been perhaps more geographically defined than that of any other recent culture. What other nation could summarize its history by the movement of a line across a map? Nothing could be further from the character of Jewish history.

THE difference of *orientation* between the American and the Jewish historical experiences is, of course, very much a result of those differences of dimension and of arena which we have already remarked. But it is in itself something quite fundamental. In American history man has for the most part *confronted* his enemy. European man comes to this continent and sweeps all before him;

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the frontier advances and the enemy is conquered. On the whole the American moves in one direction at a time, with his allies behind him and his enemies in front. Jewish history, however, has shown a people *surrounded* by its enemies. The difference may be summarized as that between an attitude of confrontation and one of encirclement. The American looks ahead toward the horizon. The Jew, with the walls of the ghetto or of the Gentiles around him, looks up to his God or down to within himself or his community.

The American orientation has led to an emphasis on the simple and the measurable, and to a stunting of the sense of paradox and of that awareness of evil which goes with it. The American meets the dragon and kills him; he is confident that the dragon is then dead and he turns complacently to another battle. His is a statistical sort of dragon. Consider, for example, the American enthusiasm for legislation, and the belief in statutory panaceas, familiarly illustrated by the prohibition amendment, or by the fact that the "lawless" Western states from the beginning provided themselves with especially long and explicit constitutions. Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* gives classic form to the struggle to master the River: a problem large and physical, but where the test of success is easy. The good man is the "square shooter" or the man who "plays according to the rules of the game." That the rules should be uncertain or the nature of the game itself mystifying, is not to be imagined. Not since the Puritans of early New England—who indeed had a Hebraic sense of encirclement by enemies—have we seen any considerable awareness of the problem of evil.

Finding his own survival itself a magnificent paradox, the Jew has a feeling for paradox everywhere: "Better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than the whole life of the world to come; yet better is one hour of blissfulness of spirit in the world to come than the whole life of this world" (*Pirke Aboth*). Jewish history amply documents a short-run pessimism and a long-run optimism; it is the perfect antidote for the naivety which would believe any victory complete. The Jew does not underestimate the power of evil; he knows that the wicked cannot be counted.

Nowhere does the disparity appear in sharper relief than in a comparison of American and Jewish humor. American humor has for the most part been forthright, the humor of exaggeration, understatement, and rough-house—of the Tall Tale, Mark Twain, Mr. Dooley, Mack Sennett, and Will Rogers. But Jewish humor has been that of double-entendre, irony, paradox, and satire; its proper response is not the belly-laugh but the nod of the head. In the world of Sholom Aleichem, where the Jew's afflictions prove his chosenness, the unexpected is normal.

The peculiarly American disposition to simplify, select, and digest has its counterpart in the Jewish disposition to expand and explore. The American willingness to reduce great mysteries to words of one syllable (to tell the life of Jesus in journalese) is countered by the Jewish readiness to find in every syllable a world of mystery. If Jewish literature and folk-legends have been marked by monuments of expansion and commentary, the American public thrives on the short short story, on abridgments, pocket anthologies, and digests.

The straightforward orientation of American history has carried with it an emphasis on extension and quantity. Jefferson's dream was of a nation of one hundred million; to "populate" or "fill" the continent was a common aim of patriots of the early 19th century. Where else has the national census been so widely taken for an index of progress? But if the advance of civilization on this continent has seemed readily measurable in quantitative terms, the march of Jewish history has been least of all susceptible of such measurement. The Jew, lacking a continent to explore, has instead explored his mind and soul and his community. His aim has been not to extend, but to perfect; he has lived in a microcosm. His chief concerns have been with the manifold possibilities of the family, with the moral import of everyday life. His mission has been not the conquest of the

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Great Plains, but the perfection of the Sabbath.

Some of the differences between the American and the Jewish historical experiences are general distinctions between secular and religious cultures. But if this is true the Jew living in America is all the better qualified to throw into sharp relief another striking feature of American life—its insistent secularity.

If Jews have lacked any clear distinction between the secular and the religious realm (like that which St. Augustine's *City of God* defined for the Christian tradition), this too fits them to hold up the mirror to American civilization.

To overlook the distinctions in favor of the supposed similarities or identities of the Jewish and the American historical experiences is to destroy the peculiar qualifications of Jews as pupils, critics, and mentors. This is, of course, not to say that American Jews are any the less Americans because they are Jews, but that if they would accept their double inheritance they must also accept the burden of an inner tension. In America of all places they cannot refuse to be Doublemen culturally.

"Our necessities," wrote Edgar Allan Poe of the United States about a century ago, "have been mistaken for our propensities. Having been forced to make railroads, it has been deemed impossible that we should make verse." Christianity (especially Protestantism) in this country has proved comfortably responsive to these necessities; it has become permeated by the predominant character of American culture to an extent which is not yet, and may never be, true of Judaism. Christianity, simply because it speaks for America, cannot so well speak to America. May it not be that the American Jew—stubbornly insoluble as he is—is providentially fitted to distinguish the necessities from the possibilities of American culture?

SUMMONING GOD

RALPH GORDON

In the light air sanctified of Sabbath Day,
I stand beside my father with a book,
Hearing the elders industriously pray,

Eyes on the page, but hazarding a look;
And watch them raise their beards majestically,
Until my father taps a soft rebuke

Upon the page, but look again, and see
Their draped heads rising to the holy sign,
And feel the hush, and tremble suddenly

As the air breaks, and the roof roars divine
With thunder of their congregated voice,
And the sound smites, and makes a splendor shine

Upon the mind, like God; and I rejoice
To see how men can summon God by choice.

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GATHERING STORM IN U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS

The Issues Behind the Conflict

HAL LEHRMAN

INSIDE Israel a visitor needs only to look around to persuade himself that it is academic to discuss taking back any large number of Arab refugees or giving away any substantial piece of Israeli-held territory.

Fifteen minutes after I landed at Lydda last March I was a leper in a busload of passengers bound for Tel Aviv because I asked my neighbor in a whisper what the Arabs' chances were for regaining the town and airport of Lydda, lopped off from the Jewish state by partition but tied back on again by the Israeli Army. During the next nine weeks I inspected the leaking tents and windy barracks of the sardine-packed immigrants. I watched their angry protest marches for work and housing. I saw immigrants being moved into partially-destroyed Arab villages. I walked through other Arab villages so completely ruined by war and neglect that neither new settlers nor old inhabitants seemed likely ever to populate them again. I went to Acre and Nazareth, where many of the Arabs who did not flee Israel are concentrated, and assessed the huge difficulties of getting them off the dole and reintegrating them into a land from which the Arab community that constituted their market and livelihood had disappeared. Finally, I went north to Galilee and south into the Negev. There I observed the Jews erecting settlements, as fast as money and suitable manpower allowed, on mountains and waterless wastes, to siphon off the younger, more pioneer-minded immigrants from the crowded camps and fortify Israel's exposed frontiers against the constant threat of fresh invasion. After all this who could see any realistic possibility that the people of Israel would seriously entertain propositions that they should surrender some of this territory or welcome home an army of destitute Arabs?

It is true that politics and diplomacy often make impossibilities possible and that distance sometimes enables one to see things invisible on the spot. Even so, I was not prepared, after leaving Israel this summer, for the strange policies attributed to the United States and emanating from Lausanne, where Arabs and Jews were sitting with United Nations conciliators in search of a permanent peace. According to reports, the Americans were demanding that Israel repatriate a quarter of a million refugees and give up the whole of the Southern Negev. One frenetic non-Jewish New York publisher, who begins his signed editorials in large type on page one of his paper, was even charging a State Department plot to cut Israel down to a few dismembered scraps of land around Tel Aviv. It was evident that American and Israeli ideas conflicted, but could the clash be as hopeless as reported? As on previous occasions when American policy on Middle Eastern affairs seemed cloudy, I went to Washington, where the policy is made, and asked direct questions.

It was immediately suggested to me that

FORMALLY, the decision as to the shape of the final settlement between Israel and the Arab states is once again in the hands of the United Nations and its Palestine Conciliation Commission. Actually, it is recognized that the major role in framing the issues and determining the outcome is being played by Washington. The daily press has been full of "ominous predictions," and many see the situation as an irresolvable conflict between an overweening State Department and an instransigent Israel. Here HAL LEHRMAN summarizes, on the basis of unofficial conversations with authoritative sources, what the real points of difference between Washington and Tel Aviv seem to be and what the two parties envisage as sound and feasible solutions of those two thorny problems —Arab refugees and territorial redistribution. Mr. Lehrman has recently returned from Palestine, on which he reported in three articles for COMMENTARY, and from Europe, where he wrote for *Fortune* and various newspapers.

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this was no time to write a story. The situation, I was told, was too fluid. A new fact-finding commission was soon going into the field to make new recommendations. American policy was feeling its way and no one could say what unexpected lines it might take on the basis of unforeseen developments.

But there always seem to be mysteries in American policy about the area once known as Palestine. No month in current history is more translucent than any other, however hot the crisis of the previous month. The Oriental veil hangs at all times over matters Oriental, or appears to, and new developments simply inspire new mysteries. It therefore seemed advisable to continue with the investigation and report on it. As always, I was received with complete courtesy in all Washington quarters and given explanations with varying but substantial degrees of frankness. The reader is privileged to accept or reject the explanations, but it should be of some use to know what they are. An understanding of attitudes today may help to anticipate the attitudes of tomorrow, and even to anticipate the events. It is especially necessary for American Jews, who are rightly alarmed by signs of a gathering storm over American-Israeli relations. The analysis below, it must be added, is entirely unofficial, being based on private conversations with non-quotable sources; nor does it attempt to pass judgment on the viewpoints expressed, this reporter believing his responsibility to find the facts already difficult enough.

WASHINGTON sees the re-establishment of peace and tranquillity in the Middle East as a paramount American national interest. Planes must land without hindrance, ships must dock, oil must flow. More important, the Southeastern hinterland of the Mediterranean must be secure from the Communist virus which feeds on internal disorder. Millions of dollars poured into Greece, Turkey, and Iran would be wasted if unrest on their vulnerable Arab flanks were to open an easy road for the Soviet.

The United States cannot achieve peace by favoring one side against the other. Just as it is against national interest to antagonize a million Israelis, so is it folly to estrange forty million Arabs. Israel is not going to rush into the arms of Moscow if balked by the United States, as some have warned. Israel can't afford to, needing American aid and sympathy as much as she does. Besides, there is at least as much likelihood that the Arab states, Syria, for example, would go left if America took a flagrantly pro-Israel position.

It is also to the American national interest that Israel, a solid potential ally, have peace. "President Truman," I was told, "did not fulfill his commitments to see a State of Israel come into existence only to have it destroyed." Israel cannot survive unless she has reasonable relations with her neighbors. A vengeful Arab world would be a deadly menace. Israel should be realistic about her own power-political situation, Washington feels. How reliable is her present temporary advantage in fighter planes and cannon? Her superiority in arms could be reversed overnight. She is, after all, a pinpoint on a vast and angry Arab map. True, American policy in 1947 and 1948 overestimated the Arabs' military potential. They were unable to produce the skill and organization necessary to defeat the Jews. But this does not mean the Arabs will be forever incapable of ganging up effectively.

Peace cannot be secured by imposing the arms embargo which the UN has recently lifted. To make it work, the embargo would require a mechanism of inspection and controls which neither Arabs nor Jews would tolerate. Anything less would make the embargo the strictly one-way affair—against the Arabs—which it was during the Palestine war. Everybody knows how weapons flowed from Czechoslovakia. UN observers stood by in comic helplessness while Haifa stevedores unloaded guns for Israel. The only effect of such a continued "embargo" would be to turn the Arabs also into customers of the Iron Curtain munitions-makers.

There is a single reliable way to make Israel safe. Peace must come by an *agreed* settlement, which will not leave raw, unhealable wounds to fester into Arab economic boycotts and ultimate war. Such a peace cannot be obtained by leaving too much for one side and too little for the other. The Jewish winners must not keep everything. Nor must the Arab losers get everything back. Real peace lies only in mutual concession.

Until now the spirit of concession has

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admittedly not been noticeable between the two disputants. They won't even agree on how many refugees there are. (The Israelis say 520,000, the Arabs say a million.) For months at Lausanne, the Jews declined to discuss the problem of refugee repatriation at all. At last they made an offer to take back 100,000 Arabs. But the offer really amounts only to approximately 60,000, since it includes some 25,000 infiltrees already in the country and about 15,000 members of separated families whom Tel Aviv had previously agreed to repatriate. In any case, Washington believes that the figure of 100,000, though a good starter, is not enough.

This does not mean that 100,000 does not satisfy Washington. It means that 100,000 does not satisfy the Arabs. The United States, I was repeatedly assured, would be pleased if the Arab states were suddenly overcome by a fit of hospitality and volunteered to keep *all* the refugees. Our government, it was stressed, has been telling Jews and Arabs alike that they are jointly responsible for the refugees, who became refugees because of a war in which Jews and Arabs were participants, regardless of the origins and the rights and wrongs of that war. Further, Washington is convinced that the refugee problem can be solved only by *substantial* repatriation inside Israel *and* resettlement outside Israel. The essential is that a division should be made on which both parties can agree. It is the Arabs, not the Americans, who reject the figure of 100,000.

THE State Department has been widely reported as insisting that Israel must repatriate no less than 250,000 refugees. I was given a categorical denial that the United States has ever officially specified 250,000 or any other figure. Such a demand would render the negotiations inflexible, torpedo the American position as conciliator, and make the United States a litigant in the dispute instead of a friend of both parties. The American role, it was reiterated, is exclusively that of an "honest broker" who is trying to arrange a fair trade between clients. The reasonable profit which the broker expects is goodwill and peace in the Middle East.

The same goes for boundary revision. It has been repeatedly asserted that the United States wants Israel to give up the lower Negev, allegedly for the strategic benefit of Britain through London's stooge, Abdullah of Hashemite Jordan. The United States, however, according to my informants, has never specified the Negev or any other area of possible cession, and has certainly not drafted any map indicating preferred territorial changes. The bottom of the Negev keeps popping up in newspaper conjecture because it seems the most likely region for transfer, since it offers the easiest available land link between Arab states cut off from each other by Israel, is largely wilderness, and has had little Israeli colonization except a few semi-military outposts. But one might just as well pick on Galilee, or the Jerusalem Corridor, or any other Israeli-held land. The United States simply stands by the position affirmed before the General Assembly in Paris as far back as last November: that if Israel wishes to keep territory beyond the frontiers assigned by the UN's partition resolution, she should offer suitable compensation elsewhere. The United States is aware that Israel's armistices with Arab states gave her more territory than partition. But these lines were tentative, based on battle, not on equity. For genuine peace, which is the basic American interest, a final territorial settlement must rest on free agreement rather than on borders imposed by force.

Is the United States, as frequently charged, supporting the Arab point of view against the Israeli? Definitely not, it is said in Washington. Cause of the false impression lies perhaps in the nature of the present Arab-Israeli argument. Right now, the Israelis have *all* the land and *none* of the refugees. But land and refugees are precisely what the argument is about. Hence, any modification of the existing situation would have to be in favor of the Arabs. Since the United States is seeking modification for the sake of peace, the United States may seem to be favoring the Arabs. But a potential Arab gain is such only in relation to circumstances created by the war, circumstances which even the Israelis have admitted cannot be permanent. If not, what was the point in beginning negotiations?

It was just because the Israelis in the early, paralyzed phases of the Lausanne parley seemed to be forgetting the need for a change in the war-created situation that the United States this summer permitted it-

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self the one clear instance of "pressure" on the Jews. An American note called on Tel Aviv at least to recognize that a refugee problem existed. The note, from one friend to another in time of trouble, said in effect that you've won the war but you can't live in a state of permanent mobilization, the refugee problem must be settled, it's in your own interest to settle it, so please show a more flexible attitude. In this démarche a leading part was taken by the White House. President Truman was moved by humanitarian considerations especially, having been greatly troubled by the apparent Israeli lack of feeling for the suffering refugees, not as Arabs but as plain people in distress. Incidentally, I was told, the notion of two minds toward Israel in White House and State Department is wishful thinking; there is one unified American policy. In any event, the American move had beneficial effect: Tel Aviv subsequently abandoned its immobility and offered to receive 100,000 refugees.

But, say the explainers, the United States has exerted much "pressure" on the Arabs, too. The reason we don't hear about it, I was wryly advised, is that there is no Arab press here—and no Arab vote. "When the record is revealed," one high source declared, "it will show that we have been as firm with the Arabs as with the Israelis." Pressed for an example, he cited the case of the Egyptian-held Gaza Strip, where some 230,000 refugees and 80,000 local Arab inhabitants are cooped up in near or total destitution. "When the Israelis said they'd take Gaza's Arabs if they could also have Gaza's territory," he recalled, "we strongly urged the idea on the Egyptians. We didn't tell them to accept the proposition—that would have been exceeding our role as honest broker. But we did ask them to discuss it. In fact, we went overboard pleading with them. We rushed around Lausanne and Cairo buttonholing Egyptians and trying to recruit their support. It didn't work. They said it would be trading land for souls. They ended by getting sore at us."

This, friends of the State Department ruefully point out, is the frequent fate of conciliators. They end with both sides "getting sore at us," Arabs no less than Jews. And without the solace of any tangible conciliation.

It was because of the failure of sweet reason at Lausanne that the United States finally decided in August to try a fresh approach, based on the prospect of large American economic aid for refugee absorption. The idea of American help had long been implied, generally in Point Four of the Truman program for development of backward areas and specifically in the so-called McGhee Plan (after Assistant Secretary of State George McGhee) for the Middle East. But until now the strategy had been to nail down a *political* settlement of the refugee question *first*, after which the United States—in concert with the other members of the UN—would see what could be done to make the settlement economically viable. This method was getting nowhere at Lausanne—and meanwhile the money for international support of the Arab refugees was running out. UN funds might be made to stretch through October and maybe into November, but no further. The UN was reconvening in September. The refugees obviously could not be left to die. But neither could the UN be again dunned for subscriptions to an eternal soup-kitchen. Advance reports indicated that Lake Success would want clear proof of a definitive solution before it would vote more money. In addition, volunteer agencies distributing the UN-financed relief in the field, like the Quakers, were beginning to fidget over their unending chore. The Red Cross, notably, was pointing out that it was an emergency service for disaster relief, and could not undertake an apparently permanent burden.

There was, finally and above all, Congress to worry about. Legislators were bound to start asking how long American taxpayers would have to feed Arabs. Since when was Congress in the refugee business? The world had millions of refugees, counting Europe, China, India, and other troublespots. Was Congress supposed to support them all? Of course, the Middle East was an unusual case, because we recognized special national interests there and a peculiar obligation arising out of American and UN connections with the partition and the war from which the refugee problem had emerged. But Congress could not be expected to underwrite a perpetual breadline. To get another Congressional appropriation, it would be necessary to show that the money was being applied,

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not to a rat-hole, but to something constructive. In short, a project had to be devised which would finally dispose of Arab refugees instead of continuing an unlimited responsibility for them.

Congress bulks so large in State Department calculations that the latter's plan for a UN economic fact-finding group to recommend how money could best be spent for ending the refugee problem was tailor-made to suit the tastes of Capitol Hill. The chief of the group was to be an American—which would take care of provincial arguments that taxpayers' money might be squandered by "furriners." And the head was to be TVA board chairman Gordon R. Clapp, a personage of sufficient prestige and homespun quality to stir grassroots imagination and swing his weight with the Congressmen when he came home to report.

SO MUCH for the Washington attitudes and policy toward the Middle Eastern dilemma to date. Now, what developments do United States policy-makers foresee from their new emphasis on an economic approach?

On the record of previous disappointments, Washington prefers not to predict exactly what any international agency is going to do—and the economic survey mission which the UN has sent to the Middle East is another international agency. Moreover, the long-suffering land of Palestine has already sustained a considerable number of visiting missions, commissions, and committees, with no spectacular success attending any of them. It would thus be rash to count on this new mission to solve its particular problem. There is one significant difference, however. This time the United States is offering to pay. Hard cash is an unusual grease for the wheels of conciliation. It might just possibly work.

Meanwhile the general findings of the mission are fairly simple to anticipate. (Indeed, many in Washington feel that, if it were not for appearances, the mission could just as well have stayed at home and worked out its recommendations from the voluminous studies, surveys, and projects for Middle Eastern betterment accumulated over the years.) The following main conclusions, it is said, will emerge from the investigation:

1. The aid program should encompass Israel and the Arab states alike, without discrimination, and allocate its support on the basis of need in each country for adequate handling of the refugees to be absorbed in that area. (In this connection, Washington has noted, the Arab press was already charging even before the mission's arrival that the mission is a State Department plot to sneak Israel's economy into the Middle East's economy and thereby trick the Arabs into direct recognition of the State of Israel.)

2. The program should begin with specific work-relief projects, such as road-building and housing, which will be of immediate value to the refugees and yet have long-range utility.

3. These initial projects should be dovetailed into medium-range resettlement and repatriation projects—dam construction, irrigation, reclamation, land improvement, and the rest—which will bring tangible returns in no more than two to three years.

4. All projects should be designed to benefit the existing populations as well as the refugees and contribute to the long-range development of sound economies throughout the Middle East.

The merging of refugee and general welfare in each area is regarded as both essential and inevitable. It would be politically undesirable, from the viewpoint of local governments, to accept a flood of refugees without offering the native peoples some simultaneous advantages. This will be all the easier because many of the likely projects for refugee integration will have long been dreamed of by the various governments for their own populations. Moreover, it will be economically impractical, if not impossible, to isolate the refugee program, since the refugees will have to help expand the existing economy in order to be absorbed by it. A long-term benefit for the refugees must also be a benefit for the region in which the refugees settle, and vice versa. Thus the scope of the Middle East's entire economy, including matters so apparently remote from the refugees' immediate needs as restoration of trade and communications, comes legitimately into the Clapp Mission's purview. This in substance is the basis of the much-mentioned but hitherto vague McGhee Plan, which might better have been labelled "McGhee Concept," since it has been more an idea than

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a program. The concept promises to emerge in the Mission's ultimate recommendations as a detailed solution of an emergency refugee crisis through the permanent integration of the refugees into a developing Middle Eastern economy.

THERE is more than enough unpopulated land. The problem is water—cheap water. The Clapp Mission's task will be to select those areas which can be irrigated for cultivation at minimum cost and delay. These requirements immediately narrow down the possibilities.

Most of the available land in Iraq, which in ancient times supported over 30 million people on an acreage now feeding scarcely 5 millions, could be rendered fertile only through heavy capital expenditures and eight to ten years of preparation—too long and too expensive. Egypt has plenty of soil which could profit from irrigation, but is overpopulated and can therefore probably be counted on for only a token number of refugees. Fertile Lebanon is already sheltering an estimated 110,000 to 150,000 refugees. This is equivalent to a more than ten per cent increase in population, which Lebanon has notified the UN she cannot absorb. Her chief worry is that any permanent influx of newcomers, mostly Moslem, would destroy the nervous fifty-fifty balance between Moslem and Christian Arabs on which Lebanese tranquillity gingerly rests, and it is likely that in the final allocation Lebanon will come out with fewer refugees than she now has.

Abdullah would probably take all the refugees into his Hashemite Jordan kingdom if he were paid more than enough money to take care of them, but the limited possibilities of his primitive realm would concentrate rather than solve the refugee problem. Jordan, with her considerable agricultural and mineral resources, will certainly absorb refugees under the development program, though vastly fewer than Abdullah would accept for cash. It is significant, however, that the British press has lately been discovering all kinds of worthwhile projects there, notably a survey by British engineers for irrigation of 75,000 acres in the Jordan Valley at a cost ranging from twenty-eight to fifty-two million dollars. (Unfriendly observers of British policy in the Middle East anticipate that British administration of United States development funds for Jordan and Iraq will increase Britain's patronage influence in those countries and bring an agreeably large number of extra dollars into her sterling area.) As for Arab Palestine, held mostly by Abdullah but still formally unattached, substantial settlement there should be aided by the psychological attraction for the refugees of an area they can recognize as home.

But the greatest possibilities of all exist in Syria. Above Homs and Hama, drainage of the Orontes swamplands could reclaim huge stretches of food-producing soil; with proper irrigation, the Khabur and Jezireh areas could be transformed into flourishing zones of colonization.

Cost of such improvements will depend on varying factors. It will be less for public lands than for private, for example, and cheaper in Syria than in Jordan. Also, whenever possible, projects will be favored which can qualify for International Bank loans. Nevertheless, the cash kitty for direct grants will obviously have to be considerable.

Very little funds for their own development may be expected from the Arab states. Since December 1, they have been credited with an estimated dollar-value of only $6,115,136 in contributions to maintenance of the refugees. The Israelis have indicated their readiness to make compensation for abandoned Arab property in Israel. However, this payment, which will probably go into a general fund for Arab rehabilitation, may be heavily limited by Israeli counter-claims for war damages and by the abnormal costs of Jewish immigration. The other member states of the UN, alphabetically from Australia to Venezuela, have thus far paid an estimated $9,776,209 in cash and kind toward UN-sponsored relief for the refugees, as compared with the American contribution of $13,377,930, or about 46 per cent of the world total.

WASHINGTON hopes to see some of the major powers doing better in their contributions to the new fund. Especially Britain, who still has her prestige in the Middle East to maintain, and France, who still has her prestige to regain. Sterling, francs, and any other currency expendable in the area would relieve the drain on dollars. But it is inescapable that the United States

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will have to supply the overwhelmingly largest grant. In determining the final figure, Washington must make a safe landing between two tricky hazards: the sum must be sufficiently tempting to coax the Middle Eastern states into accepting their fair share of refugees, and not so large that it will dismay Congress.

How soon may action be expected? Washington feels, in view of the urgent need for more UN relief funds, that some decision should be made during the current session of the General Assembly, which will have opened before this article is in print. By November the Clapp Mission should have come through with at least a preliminary report to its parent body, the Palestine Conciliation Commission. This group, in turn, should then be able to advise the Assembly that good progress is being made toward a permanent solution and that therefore the UN ought now to provide carry-over funds to fill the immediate needs of the refugees until final details of the development program have been elaborated. If the fact-finding mission can produce its complete report before the Assembly adjourns, Washington will be even happier, because the Conciliation Commission will have the data for its final recommendations. In that event, President Truman, who has already promised careful American consideration for the financing of a refugee-settlement program, would consult with Congressional leaders to reach full agreement on the extent of the American contribution. Thereafter, presumably, the spokesman for the United States delegation at Lake Success would formally and precisely commit his government to support of an internationally-financed plan for Middle Eastern development.

From then on, it would be entirely up to the UN to vote the plan, and up to the disputing parties to take it or leave it, Washington says. When one asks what would happen if the Israelis or Arabs leave it, the reply is a shrug of the shoulders which might mean either "this is our last try," or "we'll worry about that when we get to it."

One glaringly missing link will be noted in this prospectus: what redistribution of refugees and/or territory will be recommended to the General Assembly? This intelligence is vital, but no amount of research in Washington could uncover it. The pat rejoinder was that the Assembly, the Conciliation Commission, and the Economic Survey Mission are all international bodies, of which the United States is merely a single member; therefore the United States cannot possibly know or control what they will do.

This is a lofty but slightly fictitious disclaimer, at least in the case of the Palestine Conciliation Commission and the economic mission. The dominant American role stuck out a mile from the calendar of events leading up to establishment of the mission. On Monday, August 22, the chief American delegate to the PCC, Paul A. Porter, arrived back in Lausanne from talks with the White House and State Department. On Tuesday, this writer learned in Washington that a fact-finding mission, headed by an American, would be created by the PCC at Lausanne. That same day, Porter submitted proposals to his French and Turkish colleagues in the PCC. On Wednesday, the PCC approved the formation of the mission, with an American chairman yet to be designated. On Friday the appointment of the TVA's Gordon Clapp as mission leader was announced at Lausanne. Without having to argue that the mission will be a puppet dangled by Washington, it is elementary that the size of the potential American contribution must give the United States a decisive voice in any final proposals for economic development of the Middle East.

As already noted, creation of the mission marked a basic shift in the American method for achievement of Arab-Israeli peace. Political conciliation at Lausanne having failed, one would now try putting economics ahead of politics, attacking the problem of peace from the rear.

But this could not mean that the political difficulties which have blocked agreement were simply going to melt away under the warm weight of a bundle of money. Even if the United States and UN made the most generous and far-reaching offer of economic aid, Arab and Israeli would still have to accept its terms before the plan could go to work. Final determination of Israel's frontiers might conceivably be avoided in a strictly economic survey — but would the Arabs permit the matter to go unmentioned when their turn came to approve an eco-

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nomic program which necessarily dealt with specific geographic regions? Even worse, there seemed no way at all for any UN recommendation on refugees to sidestep the dispute which was the essence of the problem and its most sensitive point: how many refugees should Israel repatriate and how many should be resettled elsewhere?

Now let us examine the Israeli reaction toward the United States policy on territory and refugees.

First, let us look at the territorial argument. The United States believes that Israel should make compensation for any land held in excess of the boundaries laid down by the UN's partition resolution of November 29, 1947. Compensation to whom? the Israelis want to know. Abdullah or Farouk or the Syrian coup d'étatists? Would any one of these feel the others are entitled to "compensation"? Or should there be "compensation" for the Arab state which the UN's partition scheme "created"? But this "state" has never come into being, through no fault of the Israelis so far as the latter can see. And there seems no likelihood that the Arabs will ever let it come into being. Only about nine per cent of its territory is held by Israel, occupied by her army while driving off the Arab invasion. Israel does not hold an inch of Syrian, Jordanian, or Egyptian territory. She returned to Lebanon about a dozen villages which the Jews had captured. The greater part of Arab Palestine is garrisoned by Abdullah's forces, and the rest is held by Egypt. If the UN's Arab State of Palestine could be formed with the territory now overrun by foreign Arab armies, the Israelis say, then "compensation" through boundary adjustments might be possible. But nobody proposes this except the Soviets.

The Israelis also ask: "compensation" for what? American insistence on surrender of Israeli-held land amounts to increasing the territory of Arab states which defied the UN, invaded Palestine, and lost a war of aggression. It means that Israel should yield to these aggressors territories which do not belong to them, which the UN never awarded to them, and which they failed to capture during an attack costly to Israel in lives and property.

Finally, the Israelis contend, the Arabs themselves agreed to armistice lines which had no connection with partition. The armistice negotiations, moreover, were held under direct UN auspices. Therefore, according to the Israeli view, the United States stands alone in regarding partition as sacred. By demanding "compensation," which the Israelis translate into loss of the Southern Negev, the United States seems really to be calling for "circumcision," with ritualistic refinements, of the newly-born State of Israel.

On the question of refugees, in which the United States thinks Tel Aviv should make heavy concessions, the Israelis contend as follows:

Arab aggression created the refugee problem. Instead of solving it, the Arabs are striving might and main to inflame refugee hatred against Israel while clamoring for return of the refugees to Israel. Arab newspapers and radios are constantly calling for a "second round." All the Arab states have hiked up their "defense" budgets. The UN, with American endorsement, has lifted the arms embargo, and Britain has announced resumption of arms shipments to the Arabs. The people of Israel dread the presence among them of a large, hostile population supported and goaded by Israel's enemies across her frontiers.

Nevertheless Tel Aviv has agreed to repatriating 100,000 refugees as part of a general peace. The decision precipitated the angriest session of the Israeli parliament's brief history. Three members of the government nearly resigned at a stormy cabinet meeting. The government's strength in the country was severely shaken. But the decision stood. It stood as proof of Israel's desire for "maximum cooperation" with the United States. But the Americans are still demanding more.

By "Americans," the Israelis mean the State Department. They do not for a minute believe that the Department and the White House agree. They claim to have assurances from President Truman that he wants no territorial surrenders, and they feel he is satisfied with the 100,000 offer. But the State Department is not. Why? Because the Department, unwilling to admit that the refugee problem was created by a war that a firmer United States policy could have prevented, and unwilling to go back to Congress and the taxpayers for more refugee relief

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money on humanitarian grounds, finds it convenient to recline on principles of abstract "justice" for the Arab states. But Israel does not intend to deny her own reason for existence by failing to provide shelter for homeless Jews while making room for Arabs who abandoned their country during an Arab invasion. Nor is Israel desirous of welcoming an Arab fifth column inside her borders when she is surrounded by an Arab world openly hostile and eagerly rearming to destroy her. This, Israel says, would be committing national suicide.

Such is the Israeli position on territory and refugees. How can it be reconciled with the apparently equally adamant position of the Arabs? The Israelis privately reply that the Arabs have really no position at all, that the Arabs behave the way they behave in negotiation because they are encouraged by United States policy to do so. Without American support, say the Israelis, the Arabs would have come to reasonable terms with them soon enough.

The Israelis look back nostalgically to the days of UN Acting Mediator Ralph J. Bunche, who supervised the armistice parleys with the Arab states. Bunche's great wisdom, they affirm, was his insistence that Arab and Jew work out their differences face to face. He intruded his own person only when the negotiators reached temporary deadlocks. Left alone, the two sides succeeded in making mutually satisfactory deals. At Lausanne, on the other hand, it is charged, the American representatives have deliberately prevented face-to-face meetings. To the Israeli delegates the Americans are alleged to have said that bilateral talks with Arabs would be tantamount to flaunting the authority of the PCC. And to the Arabs "certain members of the United States delegation" are alleged to have said that there would be time enough to meet directly with Jews after the United States had "arranged" matters a bit.

It is true that *officially* the United States has not asked for any Negev surrender or acceptance of a quarter million refugees. But in *informal* conversations, the Israelis assert, the Americans have made it quite clear that this is what they want. They have made it clear to the Israelis—*and to the Arabs*, which is much more serious. The Israelis claim they know this because the Arabs have privately and triumphantly told them so!

Contrary to State Department pretences, it is said, the United States has thus been a "dishonest broker" at Lausanne, blocking the direct talks which might lead to peace, and hardening the Arab resistance. At the same time, the Israelis declare, the State Department has not been above bullying Israel to extort damaging concessions. The secret American note to Tel Aviv was no "friendly advice," as Washington asserts; on the contrary, its tone was extremely harsh; it charged that Tel Aviv was wrecking the Lausanne meetings by refusing to consider the return of any significant number of refugees or the cession of any territory; it warned that unless this stubbornness ended the United States would have to revise her attitude toward Israel.

Significantly, say the Israelis, the Arabs have shown reasonableness in the one major dispute where they and the Jews have been able to talk without interference: Jerusalem. This has been possible because of the physical proximity of the disputants in the divided Holy City and because only one Arab state, Jordan, has been involved in the argument. Committed by the UN to internationalize Jerusalem, the harassed PCC will bring such a plan to the General Assembly. But, I am told, any workable plan passed by the Assembly will have to take into account the firm decision of Israel and Abdullah to stay in their respective parts of Jerusalem. Compromise should not be difficult, since both sides seem willing to accept a UN "umbrella" over the city — international supervision of those things which are of legitimate international interest: the holy places and access to them (the Jewish side of the city has only five per cent of the shrines), Christian minorities, and possibly even the economic and municipal relations between the two areas.

But the Arabs have declined to budge an inch on the big disputes elsewhere. During the months of deadlock at Lausanne, says Israel, they clung to a "paper" position. On territory, they stood on the protocol of May 12, which took the partition borders as basis for the Lausanne discussions. On refugees, they stood on the General Assembly's resolution of December 11, which hopefully

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declared that all refugees who wished freely to return to Israel had the right to do so. All that the Arabs would say was that they might undertake to resettle any refugees who did not go back. They did not even bother formally to reject the Tel Aviv offer of 100,000, the Israelis bitterly complain. Then, in the closing days of Lausanne, encouraged further by American eagerness to please them, the Arabs mounted their high camels and indicated that Palestinian refugees could be settled only in Palestine, and that the Arab states would be glad to cooperate in settling them there if Israel surrendered the land necessary – conservatively estimated by the Arabs at more than two-thirds of Israel's present area.

Now the Arabs certainly are aware, the Israelis maintain, that this is not going to be done unless the Arabs start a new war and win it. Their ludicrously extreme demands are only for bargaining purposes, in the manner of the Oriental bazaar. But the Israelis would like to know from where the Arabs draw the inspiration for their toughness and unity. It is pointed out that the Arabs have rarely been able to agree among themselves on anything except Palestine. Even on Palestine they fell apart as soon as the test of their unity moved from the debating fields of Lake Success to the battlefields of Israel. Their Arab League is now so widely split that it is practically dead. Then why is it, the Israelis ask, that the Arabs can cling together so valiantly in resistance to a fair peace with Israel?

The only explanation that the Israelis feel makes sense is that the Arabs know the United States is on their side. Some of my informants in the Israeli camp even think that the Americans are pressing the Arabs to be tougher than the Arabs, more sensitive to the limits of Oriental bargaining than the gentlemen of the State Department, want to be. But as long as the Arabs can see some chance of bigger profits from outside interference than from free negotiation, they will go along.

In its present state of mind, Tel Aviv is consequently not disposed to be impressed by the "impossibility" of softening the Arabs' intransigence. For Tel Aviv, the issue is really between Israel and the United States.

Washington's eagerness to get a quick decision on a refugee settlement plan from the current session of the General Assembly is only partly due to the crisis in relief funds, the Israelis think. They foresee being put on the spot by the United States if the preliminary Clapp report makes disagreeable recommendations to be submitted by the PCC to Arabs and Jews for their reactions. Should the Israelis refuse to accept, the United States might then try to stampede the Assembly into an anti-Israeli position. Such a strategy rests on the assumption that Tel Aviv is more prone to yield to the UN than to the United States, for fear of seeing world indignation marshalled against Israel.

This prospect leaves the Israelis unruffled, because they consider it so unlikely to succeed. They recall that the United States has on previous occasions been unable to impose her will on the UN, notably in the matter of trusteeship and the Bernadotte Plan. They do not believe the United States will have better luck this time, especially if she tries to persuade the UN to vote away some of Israel's territory. At Paris last year the Assembly already turned down the American principle of restricting Israel to partition size. The Assembly even refused to vote for the annexation of *Arab* Palestine by Abdullah. The UN, then, will hardly be willing this time to vote for annexing the territory of a sovereign state. The very word "annexation" makes many UN members ill at ease, particularly the delegates from Latin America.

In bilateral negotiations with Egypt or Jordan, the Israelis might be willing to make small frontier adjustments–but under no circumstances, they say, would they surrender vital territory to foreign pressure. The only pressure which could make them give up the Negev would be the dispatch of United States cruisers and marines, a development which nobody in Israel or anywhere else is expecting.

Israel dreads even the thought of a split with the power whose good will and material help are immeasurably important to her future; whose five million fellow-Jews she would be unhappy to embarrass; whose problems as chief democracy in a troubled world she does not wish to complicate. But Israel will not risk what she considers the ruin of everything she fought for in order to placate the policy-makers of the State Department.

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"If we have to choose between the Negev and America's friendship," one very high and usually very calm Israeli spokesman has sadly told me, "we will keep the Negev. Our fate depends on the Negev. It is the one area where large settlement of our people is possible. We cannot survive by crowding immigrants into places like Haifa and Jaffa. Haven't Egypt and Jordan enough deserts already? The people would never understand a surrender of the Negev, or Western Galilee, or anything else. If we gave in, it would destroy the government. It might even bring civil war. . . ."

ISRAELIS see territorial cession as so patently impossible that they are at a loss to understand why the United States should be blindly insisting on it. The one semi-plausible explanation they have is that the United States is really using the threat as a bargaining point to be relinquished if Israel agrees to take a larger quota of refugees. Here too the Israelis devoutly wish the United States could appreciate the great internal political and psychological difficulties. They would like the Clapp Mission to make a serious survey *inside* Israel, instead of the quick gallop around the Middle East arranged for it in Washington. Then the Mission might realize how suspicious and fearful the Israeli people are of an Arab influx and how hard it would be for any Tel Aviv government to open the doors wider. If the refugee question were purely economic, then a large enough amount of money could solve it. But *not* having Arabs around is also worth a lot of money, the Israelis say. The government would need to be fortified by some very powerful arguments before it could go to the people with a bid for an increased refugee quota.

Searching for a way out of the woods, the leaders of Israel still see the Gaza proposal dimly as a possible escape. Admittedly, it would mean adding territory, not surrendering some. But the territory is limited, only forty miles by five, and is of no possible use to the Egyptians, its present occupants, as the Egyptians themselves concede. On the other hand, Israel would be taking over more than 300,000 destitute Arabs. (According to press reports, the Egyptians have recently begun moving some twenty-five to forty thousand more refugees into the Gaza zone.) Tel Aviv could justify the larger refugee burden before its own people, by stressing the internal and external security advantages of Gaza. Its possession would conveniently place the bulk of Israel's Arabs on the frontier instead of deep inside the country. And it would neutralize the border from sudden Egyptian attack, for below Gaza the Sinai desert stretches more than three hundred miles until the first Egyptian settlement at Ismailia.

If the solution fails, some Israeli spokesmen clutch the faint hope that the deadlock may yet be worn away by the slow mechanism of the UN and by general fatigue. It is just possible that the relief agencies will get enough money to keep the refugees through the winter even without an over-all plan. Meanwhile, if the State Department relents, the relief program may gradually broaden into a process for integrating the refugees into the different national economies by direct agreements between each government and a UN-sponsored development agency for the Middle East.

UNLESS one has injected an ear into the most secret conversations of American and Arab intriguers, it is unwise to formulate dogmatic judgments about the Israeli charges that the United States is the *éminence grise* behind Arab non-compromise.

I do know some usually competent and neutral observers, however, who feel that certain American representatives may be encouraging the Arabs without quite realizing it. These observers believe that our professional experts on the Middle East have still not learned the facts of life about motives and mentalities in that exotic climate, or made a proper appraisal of the relative capacity of Israeli and Arab for loyal and effective support of the democratic way of life in the world. Among other things the experts fail to understand, it is said, is that the mood of the Israeli people toward the Palestine Arabs has legitimately changed because of a war which Israel did not begin and which the UN failed to prevent, and that Israel is no longer willing or able to do for refugees after the war what she was willing to do for Arabs before the war. Observers note a tendency among Washington policy-shapers nowadays to take large credit for the fact that Israel exists—implying an obli-

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gation on Israel's part which most students of recent diplomatic history would be hard put to prove. In any case, there is a wide conviction among independent observers here and abroad that the United States could possibly be somewhat firmer toward the Arabs without jeopardy to peace in the Middle East or to American national interests in that strategic area of global rivalry. Conversely, there are many who hope that the land of the Jews—who have themselves played the bitter role of refugee so often in their history—may yet be persuaded to a gracious conciliation of world opinion by an act of generosity toward refugees who this time are Arabs.

Carrying this view a long step forward, others suggest that Israel could gain much in stature if her public pronouncements and policies reflected more of that imaginative awareness of her international potentialities which the world had been led to expect from a Jewish state, and less of that heated, narrow nationalism which makes the history of many small countries so parochial and trivial. Such well-wishers of Israel demand more from an Israel than from a Siam or an Iraq or a Peru—though most of them will concede and regret that the specific issues, as posed, of the present Tel Aviv-Washington dispute over territory and refugees are too limited and too identified with Israel's fight for survival to leave much room for the exercise of magnanimity or the long view.

At this writing, the prospect of a rational settlement is admittedly not brilliant. There is a dangerous gap between American professions of total neutrality and Israeli convictions that the United States is exerting unjustifiable pressure in favor of the Arabs. Unless this gap is reduced, we may eventually find ourselves confronted with an unthinkable break between the United States and Israel.

But the fact that such a break *is* unthinkable justifies considerable hope that it will not occur. Zion is not yet so secure that she can afford, if ever, to go her way alone. The United States is not yet so secure on a two-world map that she can risk estrangement of the only genuinely progressive element in the vitally important Middle East. And the Arab politicians and potentates are not so secure on top of their depressed masses that they can let the gold to finance the greatest reform in the Orient since Mohammed slip away. A little goodwill, a little statesmanship, leavened by large quantities of money, should be able to rise above the crisis.

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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

How to Deal with the Fellow-Travelling Professor

SIDNEY HOOK

THE current discussion of the question whether members of the Communist party should be permitted to teach in our schools and colleges has been conducted in such a way that it has eclipsed much more important problems concerning the character and direction of American education. Granted that some administrative measures may be necessary to prevent the process of teaching and learning from being subverted by zealots of undemocratic political faiths. Such administrative measures, however, can never be a substitute for the long-range educational philosophy and strategy that should have as one of its aims the intellectual sophistication which alone gives lasting immunity to infectious myth and dishonest argument.

Even if our schools and colleges were overnight to be liberated from every card-holding member of the Communist party—and formally all Communist party teachers will soon surrender their cards—the fundamental problem will remain of how to meet the challenge to the liberal temper which comes from the exploitation for totalitarian purposes, either deliberately or through misunderstanding, of liberal catch-words and slogans. Here no administrative measures can or should be invoked. Here the struggle can only be waged in the educational arena with educational weapons. This struggle is particularly difficult to conduct, not merely because academic decorum must sometimes be sacrificed in the interests of academic integrity, but because the effective exercise of the critical function, without which education is lifeless, arrays all reactionary groups, irrespective of their labels, against the teacher as honest inquirer and scholar.

DURING the last fifteen years—which roughly begin with the Popular Front reorientation of the Communist party in the United States—there has emerged on the campuses of the nation a complex of ideas and a form of social action which has had a profound influence on the attitudes of students. These ideas, generous in intention even if vague in expression, centered around the ideals of equality, freedom, and peace. Their roots were not found in Marxist doctrine, which regards all such abstractions with suspicion, but in the traditional unanalyzed ideology of American democracy. Their dynamism was not the result of a calculated political tactic but a consequence of the fervors and moral idealism of youth.

Two things were characteristic of this awakened liberalism. As distinct from previous liberal movements, which ebbed and flowed spontaneously with student interest but had no cumulative force, it was carefully channeled in a definite political direction. Every large social action to which it led turned out to be in behalf of a cause in which the Communist party took leadership, either from the outset or by gradual organizational manipulation. No other political tendency offered competition, partly out of weakness but mainly because such competition entailed

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SIDNEY HOOK, philosopher and educator, here offers his proposal for meeting one of the most complex and crucial problems facing our schools today—how check the spread of totalitarian organizations via fellow-travelling teachers, without undermining academic freedom? Dr. Hook, chairman of the department of philosophy at New York University, has published a number of books and has been active in such movements as the Americans for Intellectual Freedom. Professor Hook's "Why Democracy is Better" appeared in the March 1948 COMMENTARY. He was born in New York in 1902 and studied at the College of the City of New York and Columbia University.

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full-time activity and a sacrifice of academic for political life which few, except for the professionally dedicated, were prepared to make. Secondly, the implications of these liberal ideas and ideals in their devastating critical impact upon Soviet culture in theory and practice were never drawn. Any attempt to do so provoked the most vehement denunciation from the leaders of social action on the campus. Thus the peace movements of the 30's among students and the splendid support of the Spanish Loyalist government among both faculties and students were either organized or soon captured by the Communist party. The evidence that this was so had little effect even when the crassness of party control was revealed, as in the typically sudden transition from the pacifist "Oxford pledge" slogans among students in 1934 to the nationalist war cries required by the new party line. In further documentation, we need only cite the reaction in the universities to such liberal efforts as the organization of the Commission of Inquiry into the Moscow Trials, headed by John Dewey, in 1936, and the launching of the Committee for Cultural Freedom, again under John Dewey's leadership, in 1939.

The continuity of ideas and action which made almost every movement on the campus that called itself "progressive" or "radical" a recruiting ground for the Young Communist League and the Communist party, was provided not by students but by members of the faculties, most of whom could, with clearer conscience than political understanding, deny that they were Communists. Statistical studies show that to this day members of the professoriat constitute the strongest and most influential group of Communist fellow-travellers in the United States. And when I say this I am not speaking of disguised Communist party members, or even of theoretical "Marxists" of the Stalinist persuasion. The vast majority of academic fellow-travellers are not Marxists and hold views in their own fields for which they would be "liquidated" or dismissed from their posts in the Soviet Union. Yet they constitute the most loyal battalion of that little army of "progressive" intellectuals who are invariably found lending their names and prestige to Communist party front organizations, championing the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, defending Communists against even the mildest and most justified of administrative measures, and never defending or speaking for the victim of Communism anywhere.

On any view of academic freedom these men and women have every right to be members of the academic community. They have not made the total commitment of membership in the Communist party which compels them to uphold or remain silent about distasteful party dogmas and Soviet actions in the interests of a fancied ultimate historical good. Nonetheless, because of their numbers and because of the passivity of their colleagues, they have had and still have far more influence upon students' political habits of thought than any other group—an influence which in its mildest form substitutes a "radical" philistinism for the conventional kind, and in its more vicious forms softens students up for participation and membership in the Communist movement and all that this implies.

These professionals of good will who play the role of ideological "typhus Marys" are not, I repeat, the concern of legislators and administrators. They are the concern of educators who must solve the problem within the framework of democratic education.

THREE general questions must be raised about this type of academic fellow-traveller. What are his most easily identifiable intellectual habits? What are the causes of his fellow-travelling? What can be done about him?

Perhaps the most depressing feature of the habits of the fellow-traveller is the completely unscrupulous character of his intellectual procedures as soon as he discusses a political question which concerns Communists or the Soviet Union. A man who would rather starve than misreport the evidence of an experiment, who would sooner sacrifice popularity and preferment than risk making a snap judgment about a manuscript, feels not

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the slightest compunction, once his political sympathies take on a Communist tinge, about inventing his facts as he goes along, or refusing to investigate and verify evidence crucial to his arguments. I am not now referring to deliberate duplicity, which is rare and which, because it is conscious, covers its tracks so carefully that it is difficult to expose except by experts. I am referring to the half-conscious belief, born of political euphoria, that everything goes because one knows in one's heart that it is all in a good cause, and that in the interests of human welfare it is not necessary to put too fine a point on truth. Especially when one is dealing with the "enemy"—the enemy being anyone who disagrees on a matter of political importance. Intellectual integrity thus becomes the first victim of political enthusiasm.

OF MANY available illustrations I choose one from a recent discussion in the *American Scholar* (Summer 1949) on whether members of the Communist party should be permitted to teach. In commenting on the kind of thinking allegedly behind the decision to dismiss members of the Communist party from the University of Washington, about the wisdom of which genuine liberals can honestly disagree, Dr. Helen M. Lynd of Sarah Lawrence College quotes from a speech by Mr. Albert F. Canwell, of the Legislative Investigating Committee, as follows: "If anyone insists there is discrimination against Negroes in this country, or that there is inequality of wealth, there is every reason to believe that person is a Communist."

No evidence is offered that this shocking sentiment actually influenced the recommendation of President Allen or the decision of the Board of Regents. But certainly it is bad enough that Mr. Canwell or any other figure in public life should have uttered it—*if he did.* And here is Mrs. Lynd's evidence buried in a mass of footnotes at the end of her article: "Mr. Canwell spoke from notes and there was no stenographic report of his speech. Several responsible people took notes independently, compared them later, and found themselves in substantial agreement on what Mr. Canwell had said."

All this in a scholarly journal! And in the official organ of Phi Beta Kappa! No reference to newspaper stories, if any, no indication of who these "responsible" people were, how they came to compare notes, and how she came to get them, whether her informants were members of the Communist party or not—but simply a synthetic quotation of *other* people's words flatly presented as a direct statement whose source is not given in the immediate text but "explained" in small type, pages away, where only the most careful reader would see it. We could all be hanged by scholarship of this sort.

Not believing that Dr. Lynd would dare use such a damning quotation without having additional evidence, I wrote to Mr. Canwell to inquire about the circumstances of his speech. Under date of July 16 he wrote me as follows: "I did not make such a statement at Cheney or at any other place. Such a statement would be at complete variance with my thinking and I can assure you that I have never made such a statement either publicly or privately." He also asserted that the quotation credited to him was one "made up out of whole cloth" by the Communist party and its sympathizers in the State of Washington and widely used by the apparatus. What is particularly significant is his revelation that Dr. Lynd made no attempt to verify through him the fantastic and damaging statement she attributed to him.

Nor was this Dr. Lynd's only violation of the ethics of scholarship. She sought to give the impression that in his testimony before the Tenure Committee hearings, Professor Sophus K. Winther had disavowed the article he wrote for *Harpers* about his experiences in the Communist party—a disavowal Professor Winther has indignantly denied. And as if this were not enough, she insinuates that the recommendation of President Allen and the decision of the Board of Regents was influenced by the appropriation of twenty-five million dollars by the Legislature for a new medical school, so that the dismissals were a kind of "thank you." One wonders

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whether Dr. Lynd is aware of how serious such charges are. But there can be no doubt at all that Dr. Lynd would never descend to this level in her own field of study and that she would be horrified if anyone sought to defend the dismissal of Communist party teachers with methods similar to those with which she attacks it.

ANOTHER characteristic feature of the non-party worker in the academic vineyard is his refusal to be bound by consistent standards of judgment. Absolute consistency, of course, is not always possible or desirable, but the departure from it in apparently similar cases always requires explanation or justification. Otherwise judgment has no rational basis and words become systematically ambiguous, no more than a cloak for political hypocrisy. Of myriads of illustrations of this attitude, three may be briefly mentioned.

After the publication of the photostatic copies of the checks issued by the so-called Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee to Gerhard Eisler, accused by former leading Communists of serving as the chief Cominform representative in the United States, a government agency demanded that the books and records of the Committee be submitted for inspection. Refusal was adjudged as contempt and punishment upheld by the courts. Whereupon an intense campaign against the alleged violation of the civil rights of the responsible officials of this notorious Communist front organization was conducted on the colleges and campuses of the country, spearheaded by fellow-travellers. (Incidentally, none of the defenders of this organization showed the slightest qualms about the ethics of raising money for the "orphans and widows of anti-Fascist refugees" and diverting the funds, at least in part, to the support of Communist functionaries.)

Let us assume that the point at issue is at least debatable and that the Supreme Court, which in the Terminiello and other cases has not betrayed an illiberal spirit in interpreting civil rights, was mistaken in refusing to set the conviction aside.

Not so long ago the director of the Ku Klux Klan of the state of Alabama was sentenced to jail for contempt for refusing to produce Klan records of membership before a grand jury. He pleaded that he was bound by a sacred oath of secrecy and that revelation of the names of the Klansmen would be an act of betrayal and prejudicial to the interests of his fellow-members. Not a single one of the staunch defenders of the refusal of the Communist front organization to submit its records, or of the Hollywood "ten" to answer questions concerning their membership in the Communist party, so much as raised a murmur against the conviction of the Klan leader. It is a safe guess to say that they applauded it, as every genuine liberal—it seems to me—should. But not one vouchsafed an explanation of why it was wrong to withhold evidence of membership in the Ku Klux Klan but right to withhold evidence of membership in the Communist party.

A second illustration is provided by the denazification procedures in occupied Germany. Anybody who has been on the scene knows that with all its limitations the American denazification policy has been the most stringent of all. This has not prevented the academic fellow-traveller from bitterly complaining that the United States was giving aid and comfort to former Nazis. But when Walter Ulbricht, the leading German lieutenant of the Kremlin, openly proclaims in the Russian-licensed *Nacht-Express* that formerly active Nazis are welcome to leading posts in the new Germany, it evokes no similar response. And yet the motivation of the Kremlin in wooing these formerly active Nazis is transparently clear. "Even if they have not completed their conversion," says Ulbricht, "they clearly realize now that the aggressive forces in the United States aim at the destruction of the German nation."

The final illustration is the crassest of all. With hardly any effort at concealment, the Communist party recently organized a Bill of Rights Conference in New York City to consider the "unprecedented attacks" on civil rights in the United States and to take measures in their defense. Apparently not believing that the United States Supreme Court,

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the American Civil Liberties Union, the AFL, CIO, and other organizations of the labor and liberal movement have acted sufficiently in defense of our civil rights, a number of leading academic figures came forward as sponsors of the Conference, at which a resolution was unanimously adopted condemning the trial of the leaders of the Communist party and expressing opposition to the Smith Act under which the indictments were drawn. But at the very same session a resolution calling upon the President to grant pardons and restore the civil rights of eighteen Socialist Workers party members convicted at Minneapolis in 1940 under the very same statute—the Smith Act—was howled down, with Paul Robeson declaring that the Trotskyist victims of the Smith Act deserved defending no more than Fascists or Ku Kluxers. Not a single academic sponsor withdrew from the Conference in protest against this brazen declaration that the civil rights only of Communists and of those approved by them were worthy of being defended.

WHAT explains this calamitous lapse from elementary justice on the part of men and women who in their own fields are so circumspect about intellectual consistency and moral decency? Many things, not the least of which are justifiable indignation against administrative stupidities and injustices by state and school and outrageous acts like those committed at Peekskill. But most of it can be traced to an assumption deeply held, even when it is unspoken, that the Communist movement is an integral element in the wider movement of progress and enlightenment. Communists, it is held, are people of "the Left," uncouth perhaps, but undoubtedly sincere. Despite our legitimate criticisms of their amusing ideological crotchets, they are after all people "on our side." Whoever criticizes them too severely or refuses to work with them in a common enterprise "breaks the unity of all progressive forces." Besides, the Communists are not always wrong, while our own government is often and clearly wrong. Even those academic fellow-travellers who are in no sense revolutionaries themselves can be heard to say, "The Socialists just talk, but the Communists mean it," as if this were a point in the latter's favor. And then there is the Communist rhetoric about democracy. Communists are staunch and aggressive fighters, we are told, but after all they are for peace; they lie, but in the interests of a higher truth; they may seem to be disloyal to this country, but it is out of loyalty to the Soviet Union, which in turn is loyal to the human race.

How can intelligent men and women believe such nonsense? And at this late date, too? Here again there is a baffling inconsistency about the academic fellow-traveller. He knows there is no transference of training from one field to another, and he doesn't know it, and he applies this alternating scepticism and faith with a characteristic selective bias. When he reads that a Nobel Prize winner in science has come out for free enterprise or the immortality of the soul, he murmurs: "Another smug scientist pontificating in a field in which he knows nothing." But let the same Nobel Prize winner say that the United States constitutes a greater threat to peace than the Soviet Union or that our supply of atomic bombs should be turned over to the UN, and he will quote these opinions as authoritative.

Intelligence may be a native power but political intelligence is something that is slowly acquired, and only by hard study. The study, however, must not be confined merely to official documents but must be guided by a leading principle, which Marx himself formulated almost a century ago when he declared that we should not judge a class by what it says of itself any more than we judge an individual. This sounds elementary enough but is something that was never learned by that professor of political science who once argued that the Comintern had nothing to do with the Soviet regime because there was no mention of its existence in the Soviet Constitution.

The best method—although not infallible—of acquiring political intelligence about

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political realities is political experience. It is an interesting fact that the vast majority of academic persons who have had any experience in political activity or in the genuine labor movement, in the course of which they had to deal with members of the Communist party, rapidly learn the truth about them. But since such interests must be peripheral for most scholars and teachers, the absolute number of the politically sophisticated is small.

Short of actual experience, a close study of Communist theory and *practice* is indispensable to developing a minimal awareness of the situation in the world today. This brings us to the question of what can be done to meet the challenge of the academic fellow-traveller.

II

A FEW things by this time should be clear. First, the general situation is such that it cannot and should not be met by administrative measures. Even when justified against out-and-out party members, administrative measures, *unless authorized and implemented by the teachers themselves,* are apt to worsen the situation. Nor are loyalty oaths of the slightest aid in restoring intellectual integrity where it has been undermined, or in preventing the academic fellow-traveller—and for that matter even the party member—from battling for the party line. For many years in the State of New York all teachers have been required during the course of their careers to take an oath pledging themselves to support the Constitution. No one has ever refused to take such an oath; no one has ever been punished for violating it. It is an empty gesture, recognized even by those who administer it as pointless.

Not pointless but dangerous is the directive by the New York State Board of Regents to all public school authorities under the Feinberg Law to report on the measures undertaken to enforce its provisions, which call for the dismissal of all subversive teachers. For the main issue, even as far as Communist party members are concerned, is *not* one of political subversion but of professional ethics, about which the teachers themselves are the best judges. It cannot be too often repeated that it is not because of his *ideas* that a Communist party member is unfit to teach but because of his *professional misconduct* in joining a conspiratorial organization, one of whose declared purposes is corruption of the teaching process for political purposes. But what makes the Feinberg Law pointedly dangerous is that one mistaken application of its provisions can easily create an incident which the Communist party will exploit to the utmost, swelling the ranks of the fellow-travellers and imbuing them with crusading self-righteousness. If such an incident is not created by some zealously reactionary superintendent, we can be certain that the Communist party, which did not hesitate to denounce its political opponents, especially on the Left, to the Gestapo as secret Communists, will do its best to create one.

In general the intrusion of the state in affairs of the school involving professional misconduct is to be deplored. But if the teaching profession (like labor) fails to clear up its own sore spots—and no one can reasonably deny that there are evils to be remedied—such intervention is to be expected.

Since government intervention is inadvisable even in treating the problem created by card-holding members of the Communist party, *a fortiori* it should never be invoked in the struggle for intellectual integrity against the careless, the irresponsible, and the half-witting accomplices of the party line. In the interest of honest dissent, there must be no legal proscriptions of doctrines of any kind.

What then should be done? Until the threat to the democratic culture of the West disappears, the theory and practice of official Communism should be made a required study in the curriculum of all colleges. It is the great merit of President Conant to have realized the importance of this. We can expect President Hutchins to denounce the proposal as a concession to temporalism, and to interpret the temporal as the immediate, and the immediate as the instantaneous. But as anyone knows who has even a bowing acquaintance with Communism, the issues it

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raises are not only immediate—they involve the foundations of belief for our age, and, according to Communist claims, for all recorded history and class societies. There is plenty of meat in a curriculum so expanded. But we must hasten to add—to safeguard against misunderstanding—that it cannot be the only subject of curricular emphasis. More important still, democracy is to be studied not as a conflicting ideology in a war but as a way of life to be independently explored, developed, and criticized in relation to the problems of contemporary society.

What good will such a study accomplish? The good not only of understanding the enemy but of recognizing what must be done in the reconstruction of our own culture to realize the promise of democratic life. As a by-product, it will no longer be possible --let us hope—for so many college-trained persons, not to mention their teachers, to believe that the Bolsheviks overthrew the Czar rather than a political system which Lenin himself had characterized as the freest in the world. Using official Communist sources, students will become acquainted, at least as an hypothesis, with the view that the official Communist parties in all countries are organizational tools of the Soviet regime, employed for every purpose including espionage, and not at all an integral section of the indigenous "Left" movement. They will perhaps begin to understand what a politics based on a *Weltanschauung* involves, and the far-reaching consequences of a movement which openly declares that *any means* is justified to achieve the victory of the proletariat, whose dictatorship is "substantially" identified with the dictatorship of the Communist party.

The end of such instruction should be not only to clarify the issues between democracy and Communism but to make all persons aware of what they are doing when they reject, accept, or travel along with the Communist party and its organizational fronts. The age of political innocence in the colleges and universities will come to an end. Instruction properly given will also make clear how one kind of reaction helps another, and that just as Communist attacks on "fascists" are often the prelude to the extirpation of democracy (as in Czechoslovakia), so fascist attacks on "Communists" may (as in Spain) be aimed at all liberals and democrats. At the same time it is to be hoped that the fashionable and undiscriminating trend against the welfare state and welfare economy as an expression of "statism," as a forerunner if not a weaker version of totalitarianism on the Soviet model, will be halted, and the arguments for all sorts of alternative systems of planning, from the New Deal to democratic socialism, will be considered on their merits.

III

How necessary instruction in the actual theory and practice of the Communist party is may be gathered from the discussion of the issue whether members of the Communist party should be permitted to teach. This is not an open-and-shut question either way. But it is noteworthy that practically every defender—though not all—of the right of the Communist party teacher to hold his post has ignored the concrete documentary evidence which shows that members are under instruction to inject the party line in the classroom, to build cells and capture departments. Nor have they paid the slightest attention to the character of the anonymous party-cell literature, in whose preparation and distribution on campuses every member of the cell is involved.

A case in point is provided by the discussion of Dr. Alexander Meiklejohn (New York *Times,* March 27, 1949) who oddly enough in his book on education maintained that *"the purpose of all teaching is to express the cultural authority of the group by which the teaching is given,"* and that "teacher and pupil . . . are both agents of the state"*—essentially illiberal Hegelian notions. The nub of Dr. Meiklejohn's argument on the question of Communist teachers is that since "the primary task of education in our colleges and universities is the teaching of intellectual freedom, as the first principle of the demo-

**Education Between Two Worlds,* 1942, page 91 (italics in the text) and page 279.

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cratic way of life," we would be interfering with "fair and unabridged discussion" if teachers were dismissed on grounds of membership in the Communist party.

Dr. Meiklejohn does not feel called upon to explain how "fair and unabridged discussion" can be carried on by those who are under instruction to inject and indoctrinate party dogmas and who have clearly expressed their intention to do so by virtue of their membership in an organization which gives them these instructions and does not countenance refusal to abide by them. The only assumption on which this glaring inconsistency can be justified is that none but members of the Communist party can give an adequate and fair statement of Communist theory and strategy. But such an assumption is clearly absurd. If generalized, it would imply that objective teaching on any issue in dispute is impossible. If anything, members of the Communist party are prepared to suppress evidence (e.g., in their denial of Lenin's testament, the early history of the Red Army, etc.) in accordance with the exigencies of the Kremlin's policy. "Fair and unabridged discussion" by all means. But in matters of the class struggle, which according to party doctrine pervades every aspect of our culture, the ideal of "fair" discussion is considered in Communist theory as a bourgeois illusion. "Objectivism" is in fact one of the great heresies in the international Communist movement.

Even more startling is Dr. Meiklejohn's discovery that despite the fact that Communist party members shift their ideas "as the policies of the party shift," and that despite the fact that they are under "an unusually rigid and severe discipline," the only explanation of their behavior is that in general they "are moved by a passionate determination to follow the truth where it seems to lead." Communist party members must believe, then, if what Dr. Meiklejohn is saying is the case, that the shifts of the party line are also motivated by a passionate determination to follow the truth. Apparently they have somewhat mistaken the Politbureau for an Academy of Science.

But there is a simpler question still which stares out of Dr. Meiklejohn's words. If the explanation of Communist party members' behavior is their search for the truth, then why the necessity of the "unusually rigid and severe discipline" he admits exists? The scientific *methods* by which the truth is reached and what they disclose are certainly sufficient discipline for democratic educators. Why then is there need for the *organizational* discipline of the Communist party in respect to belief?

It is at this point that Dr. Meiklejohn makes his most momentous discovery. The organizational discipline of the Communist party is not really discipline, or is discipline only in a Pickwickian sense. According to him, members of the Communist party are not forced to believe anything. For their actions are voluntary. And then, in a sentence for which I predict immortality as a classic illustration of fallacious thinking, he adds: "If membership is free, then the beliefs are free." In other words, because an action is free, i.e., voluntary—joining the Communist party—the beliefs which are held in virtue of that membership are also free, i.e., a result of the quest for the truth.

Let us examine this. Suppose a teacher accepts money from the National Association of Manufacturers or from a foreign government on the understanding that he champion its side on any issue. I assume that in such a case Dr. Meiklejohn will grant that he has betrayed his trust and is unworthy to teach. I am also confident that Dr. Meiklejohn would say of such a person that he was under orders to reach predetermined conclusions, that he was bound by a discipline that was foreign to the scholar's proper objectivity. But note: the teacher's action is free, i.e., voluntary. No one compelled him to accept the offer. He could take it or leave it. Were he to argue that because his action was free therefore his beliefs were free, i.e., a result of the quest for the truth, Dr. Meiklejohn would be the first to expose the sophistical ambiguity by which he sought to gloss over his intellectual dishonesty.

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THE fact that a man is paid to work for the NAM or a foreign government is irrelevant to the free or voluntary nature of his act. He might even believe in the program of the NAM or the goals of a foreign government and work for nothing. What makes him intellectually dishonest as a teacher is that by his action he has signified his willingness to teach *according to directives received* and not in accordance with objective methods of searching for the truth. If a scientist is paid money by an industrial firm to undertake research, that does not make him intellectually dishonest. If he is paid money on the understanding that his research will "prove" what the firm tells him to prove, he is.

Certainly, membership in the Communist party or in the Ku Klux Klan is free. Even in the Soviet Union no one is compelled to join the party, so, on Dr. Meiklejohn's principle, no thought control exists there. But what he fails to see, despite mountains of evidence, is that the nature of a member's commitment to the Communist party is incompatible—because of (a) his party pledge, (b) the party dogmas, and (c) clearly defined party duties as given in official instructions on how to behave in the classroom and on the campus—with commitment to the scientific method of inquiry.

In a certain sense one can speak of the "integrity" or the "courage" of a person who joins the Communist party or the Ku Klux Klan openly. But so long as he remains in the organization—and the discussion is about present and active members—he is not free to profess only what he believes the scientific evidence warrants. Lenin made this crystal-clear even before the October Revolution. He reversed Dr. Meiklejohn's argument and with better justification. *Just because* membership is voluntary, those who join the Communist party must accept its intellectual discipline; they are not free to think and write as they please. If this irks them, they can resign; if they remain, they are bound. A decade after the Revolution, Stalin drew the awful consequences for the whole field of human knowledge and art.

Dr. Meiklejohn is as wrong as anyone can be. It is loyalty to the Soviet regime and not "a passionate determination to follow the truth" which leads the Communist party member to teach any specific Communist doctrine on any specific point. His "integrity" is expressed only in his total commitment. This does not mean that he necessarily agrees with the truth, say, of a specific Communist characterization of Roosevelt or of the Marshall Plan at any time. It does mean that in so far as he is loyal to the Kremlin, in so far as he chooses freely to remain in the Communist party, he is not free to be *publicly* critical of the party line even if he privately disagrees with it. Usually, he squares this to himself with the reflection that the point on which he feels the party line is wrong is comparatively unimportant. *But it is precisely this subordination to his total commitment, and his evaluation of what is important or unimportant in the light of a political objective, that makes it impossible for him to exercise the free criticism he would engage in were he loyal to the principles of scientific inquiry.*

Not all those who are opposed to a general ban on Communist party teachers are as confused about where the genuine issues lie as Dr. Meiklejohn. And he is unique in allowing himself to be seduced into fallacy by the two senses of the word "free." But he is typical in what he does not know about the Communist party at home and abroad.*

IV

THERE is something more, in addition to revising the curriculum, that American educators can do to improve the quality and accuracy of political discussion in academic circles. That is to break with the genteel tradition of suffering intolerance, disingenuousness, and intellectual dishonesty in silence. One of the most amazing expressions of liberal sentimentalism and muddled think-

*There are other arguments against the ban of Communist party teachers which in a fuller account would have to be considered. I have discussed some of them in the New York *Times* of February 27, 1949, and in the *Saturday Evening Post* of September 10, 1949.

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ing is the view that we cannot be intolerant of those who preach and practice intolerance, that if we oppose fanaticism we cannot ever do so passionately, and that forthright exposure of dishonesty and dangerous ignorance is somehow a betrayal of the intellectual process. This overlooks the truth that ideas can corrupt as well as power; and that ignorance, especially when it is cultivated, can be deadly. Liberalism as a temper of mind is the sworn foe of all absolutes of doctrine and program; but only because it is pledged to a self-critical and self-corrective exercise of the processes of intelligence.

A scholar who propounds anti-Semitic or racist views should be criticized mercilessly even when we grant his constitutional and academic right (provided he is not a member of the Klan, a fascist party, or similar organization) to hold and express such views. Catholic professors, wherever they are, who proclaim that secularism must lead to Communism or fascism, whose fantastic attacks on men like John Dewey and Bertrand Russell show that they are more fearful of *their* ideas than those of the totalitarian rival power of Communism, should be given public lessons in logic and history. The record of Catholic collaboration with Franco, Mussolini, Salazar, Tiso, Dollfuss, and others should be brought vigorously to their attention. A sociologist who defends concentration camps in the Soviet Union as a model of corrective prison labor in the face of books like Gliksman's *Tell the West* should not be administratively curbed but he should be called publicly to account by his colleagues. A fellow-traveller who justifies his refusal to protest outrages against civil liberties in countries under Communist rule on the ground that we must clean our own doorstep, when he has been active on every committee organized by the Communist party to protest lack of civil rights in Germany, China, Argentina, and Spain, should be exposed as a political hypocrite.

An astronomer who couples the Soviet purge of scientists with the unenforced laws against the teaching of evolution in our three Southern states as equally bad, when he refrained from mentioning these laws in his denunciation of the Nazi purge of scientists, should be challenged to defend his discriminatory judgments. A literary critic who tells us that if he were in France he would be a Communist and who denies the facts about the suppression of civil liberties and academic rights in satellite countries should not be permitted to pose as a lover of freedom by his colleagues. A political scientist who writes that the Communist International was organized to defend the Soviet Union against invasion, when its existence was actually planned even before the October Revolution, or who invents a legend about there being two General Vlassovs in order to uphold the fiction that all the Russians rallied to Stalin's regime after Hitler's invasion, or who affirms that Trotsky was a fascist whose dealings with the Nazis were proved, and that he was assassinated by a bona fide member of his own organization who objected to his plotting with Martin Dies to overthrow the American government—such a man should have his credentials to competent scholarship openly questioned by his peers. Finally, anyone who professes to be appalled at Stalin's regime of terror but who claims that the reports of Hitler's atrocities were exaggerated and either justifies or is evasive about the brutal suppression of all democratic opposition in Spain should be subjected to the same critical exposure.

It is not the fact that these men lack imagination to comprehend the sufferings of the victims of totalitarian oppression, or the compassion to feel akin to the innocent and unjustly accused, or the courage to make an open and total commitment to a new political religion, which chiefly evidences their absence of academic integrity. Whatever failings they reveal on this score are the failings of human beings no matter what their vocations. Scholars or shoemakers may be morally insensitive, cruel, mean, and cowardly, and still turn out competent books or well-made boots. What crucially defines the treason to *academic* integrity on the part of these non-party scholars I have described is not

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even their violations of the canons of inquiry, which may only be occasional. It is their defense of, or silent acquiescence in, the use of police methods against their colleagues abroad—and what police methods!—to suppress ideas in any field not countenanced by party dogma, and their direct and indirect support in this country of a movement which wherever it comes to power aims to destroy every vestige of academic freedom. These "defenders" of academic freedom are its gravediggers.

Not even the most slippery apologist can deny that Communist regimes neither believe in nor practice academic freedom. It is no part of academic freedom for teachers anywhere to use the class room as concealed members of a political party to "inject" party dogmas into teaching, and "to take advantage of their positions without exposing themselves"—as the Communist party urges its members to do. The astronomers and geneticists, the artists and the historians who are purged in the Soviet Union are not punished for acting the way Communist party teachers do in the West, but for holding "wrong" beliefs or for insufficient enthusiasm about "right" ones—"wrong" and "right" ultimately depending on the fiat of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist party. It is certainly permissible —although I believe mistaken—for an individual to argue that despite everything members of the Communist party who are teaching in our schools and colleges should be completely unmolested. But when this is coupled with an ambiguous attitude toward the elimination not only of the academic freedom of teachers but often of their persons in Soviet Russia and other countries, what can this betoken but an utter lack of academic integrity? And we may include those in this judgment who up to yesterday have refused to protest academic practices in Communist countries but who now make brief and hasty references to the Soviet practice as a kind of rhetorical strategy in their campaign for the retention of Communist party members in this country.

PUBLIC criticism of the academic fellow-traveller will not be easy. Some of the totalitarian liberals who vigorously denounce administrative measures in this country and urge that things be settled in the free marketplace of ideas are the first to utter shrill cries of "Red-baiter!" as soon as they and their friends are subjected to criticism. What they really desire is complete *immunity* from criticism.

Whether we are aware of it or not, whether we like it or not, the groves of the academy have become one of the battlefields in the current struggle for freedom whose outcome will determine the pattern of culture for centuries to come. Whatever may be true for other battlefields, in the academy we must see to it that the struggle is fought under the same rules of the game which in the past have led in so many fields to clarification and new knowledge. But no one has a right to invoke the rules of the game as protection when he is detected violating them. The man of academic integrity is prepared to learn from anyone. As a scholar he recognizes no doctrines as subversive. For him doctrines are only valid or invalid in the light of objective evidence and logical inference. That is why he is responsible for keeping the sources of knowledge free from contamination by secret political storm troopers—Communist or others. That is why he must be prepared to take up the struggle, without the help of the state or the regents or the administration, against the obscurantists and professional innocents who would destroy the conditions of honest intellectual inquiry. He will have to fight on many fronts—against misguided patriots, clerical fascists, and those who are maddened by Communist intrigue into foolishness that may be harmful to free institutions.

It is a pity that so much intellectual energy must go into the defense of values which in happier times were taken for granted as integral to the life of scholarship. But it is precisely these values which are today under attack. If they die academic integrity dies, and with it academic freedom.

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AMERICAN ZIONISM AT AN IMPASSE

A Movement in Search of a Program

ARTHUR HERTZBERG

MY GRANDFATHER was not a Zionist, and yet my first experience of Zionism was an act of identification with him—and rebellion against my father. It came right after my Bar Mitzva. My father, who was too much of an old-fashioned Hasid to force the hand of the Messiah, could no longer oppose the new tendencies invading his home, and so finally, rather behind his back, I joined the Gordonia youth group. As its name shows, it was sponsored by the Labor Zionists.

It is always tempting to read back into early adolescence attitudes acquired or clearly formulated later, but I rather think that even then, in a dim sort of way, I was not quite satisfied with the Jewish values of my home. Or, perhaps, as the son of a rabbi I felt left out of things, as indeed was the case, for I was made to study the Talmud during winter afternoons and all day during the summer while others were playing. A child is very lonely with a big folio in front of him —and Henty's stories of the Napoleonic wars, which I read when I was supposed to be reviewing (*iberchazern* is the traditional word), simply made the loneliness more poignant by contrast with such deeds of heroism.

Joining Gordonia was my first independent decision of consequence. It meant the beginning of a Jewish experience of my own. Of course, it was a decision compounded not of ideas but of symbols. My grandfather was still alive in Poland and my memory retained a sort of snapshot image of him. I had been taken to see him in Lemberg when we were leaving for America and I could still see a long gray beard close to my five-year-old head. He was not well off and my parents were too poor to do much to help him or the rest of the family. As Hitler came more and more into my consciousness—and I read more of Jewish martyrology—my grandfather's image acquired deep furrows in the face, a bent back, and troubled eyes. I knew that he was not a Zionist, and yet my Zionism was in large part an act of piety towards him.

It was also, as I said, an act of rebellion. That, too, was crystallized in a symbol, the leader of our group. He was a young man of twenty-two or twenty-four who had a way of life definitely his own. He wore blue, open-collar shirts (the emblem of Hashomer Hatzair) in any weather, did not attend synagogue, and I knew that he ate *trefah*. What he talked of was the new life being created in the *kibbutz*, the Palestinian collective, where he would soon go. I identified myself with him and dreamed of being able to be a new kind of Jew, free and strong and taking part in a life more real than school or Talmud.

So I took the Jewish National Fund box in hand and trudged the streets of the east side of Baltimore. It was painful to ask strangers for money, but Grandfather was being saved, I was assuring my independence from my father, and the new Jewish world was being built—all through the little blue box.

BOTH Zionism and I have changed a bit since those days sixteen years ago. From

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THE question, "What next for American Zionists, now that Israel is established?" has been a central topic in organized Jewish life for many months now. ARTHUR HERTZBERG, long active in Zionist affairs, here presents his analysis of why the adherents of the movement seem to be as far from agreement on any program for the future as when the discussion began. He is the rabbi of the West End Synagogue in Nashville, Tennessee. Born in 1921, he studied at Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Columbia, and the Jewish Theological Seminary. He has just returned from a trip to Israel.

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a minority movement in a rather indifferent Jewish community and a world which did not take it very seriously, Zionism has risen to eminence. It has succeeded in creating a new state and—what is perhaps more difficult—in achieving around itself, at least from 1945 to 1948, a startling unanimity of Jewish opinion. During those three years there was about Zionism the compelling atmosphere of a moral crusade in which all of world Jewry participated. Bevin was the common enemy and the need of the refugees was sore. We all had felt helpless, frustrated, and, in our inmost hearts, immoral during the war as European Jews were being slaughtered. The fight for Israel united us so completely, I suspect, because it was at least a chance to make the world of murderers bend to our will, and also, perhaps, relieve our sense of guilt.

Now that Israel exists, the unity generated by the struggle is fast disappearing. As Oscar Wilde once said: there are two tragedies in the world—one is not getting what you want and the other is getting it. Now that the world Zionist movement has achieved its object, it is in a peculiar and difficult position. In the struggle for Israel, Diaspora Zionism created the greatest élan and the strongest organized instruments in modern Jewish experience. Zionism feels the need to continue its endeavors—certainly all is far from well with the Jewish world, both in Israel and internationally—and yet it is caught in an impasse between its own slogans, platforms, and previous record, and the realities of Jewish life today.

My grandfather is dead—he was killed in Lemberg by the Nazis—and what remained of my family in Europe is now in either Israel or the United States. Of course I know that there are still Arabic-speaking Jews who, even though rather foreign to me, are my brothers, and whom I must help towards Israel. The sense of responsibility for that task does not, however, provide the content for a stirring Jewish emotion. Indeed, it may have an opposite effect. It keeps reminding me that I really am thinking in terms of two categories of Jews—those who feel sufficient pressure to want to leave their homes, and we Americans who, in the vast majority, do not intend to move permanently to Israel. And yet, did not Herzl say in the *Judenstaat* that all of Jewry must return to the homeland? Is this not still an almost unquestioned doctrine of Zionist thinking in Israel?

As a Zionist, I face an impasse. Without passing moral judgment on either myself or Israel, I know that I am something other than the Israeli, by upbringing, by my allegiance to America, and by my desire to be part of the cultural traditions of the Western world. And yet Zionism has been part of the underpinning of my life, that part which gave it the greatest zeal and vitality. It is not easy to let it go.

WHAT shall I do with my Zionism? I know that I am not alone with this problem, that it is now being much discussed. But I have yet to hear any suggestion that really hits the mark. The attempt to maintain the political character of the movement does not excite me. It is true that a Zionist movement still remains in the political arena, and that Israel is still young and far from secure in the tides of international affairs. Yet the tasks left to bodies other than the Israeli government are of the nature of a political mop-up operation. American Zionist leadership speaks of dangers that may arise for Israel, in the face of which world Zionism must remain strong, standing ever ready on guard; but standing guard, as every soldier knows, is at best only tedious duty.

Indeed, it is becoming increasingly evident that the emergence of the new state will inevitably strip Diaspora Zionism of all political functions. In the heyday of the recent struggle for the state, I had a very real sense of participation. Wires and directives from the Zionist Emergency Council—the joint political high command of all Zionist bodies—were an almost daily occurrence. All this activity took time and pains, and therefore satisfied the heart. It satisfied my heart because I was still, down deep, thinking of my grandfather and of the cousins I had never met. I was helping to build a home for them and for other grandfathers and cousins.

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But even Zionists are human beings and not selfless saints. When one builds a home for one's relatives, several emotions are brought into play. Certainly the one that predominates is the sense of kinship and personal responsibility. However, once the home is built, there are also the less creditable desires to receive gratitude, to exercise a continuing right to make the ultimate decisions, or, at the very least, not to be embarrassed or greatly displeased by the decisions that are made. The political direction of the state of Israel has already jarred these emotions and bids fair to deepen very fundamental divisions within world Jewry. I know that this was inevitable and so pass no moral judgment—but a very difficult situation does exist and needs description.

When Mr. Sharett, the foreign minister of Israel, was in the United States some months ago to help UJA fund-raising, he made it pointedly clear that his government would allow no political interference by Jews outside its borders. In this he reflected the mood of Israel, which definitely regards the new state as primarily, indeed solely, the creation of its own desperate courage and military skill. Israel feels that it owes to the Diaspora the obligation to do nothing to injure the position of Jews in other lands and to accept within its border those who wish to come. On the other hand, it considers itself entitled to economic aid because of its open door for the refugees, whom it quite correctly regards as a charge upon the conscience of world Jewry.

Theoretically speaking, Diaspora Zionists have no quarrel with Mr. Sharett. The fear of the accusation of dual allegiance is very real and American Zionist leadership has given repeated assurances that it will not—indeed cannot—meddle in the internal affairs of Israel. I, for one, on the basis of general feeling more than specific and tangible evidence, do not quite believe these assurances. First of all, Zionism cannot possibly give up, without a struggle, its influential position. Zionist leaders simply have too much political interest and experience to stay out of the arena. In the second place, Israel's political policy, both domestic and foreign, is more important to Jews outside the state than is the policy of Ireland to the American Irish. Americans of Irish descent were rather embarrassed but not basically endangered by Irish neutrality during the war. Israeli policy has much more direct effects on the situation of the world Jewish community. A pro-Russian Israel would probably not face the present difficulties with Russia's satellites about the virtual stoppage of emigration. On the other hand, that kind of Israel would make American Jewry very unhappy. Diaspora Zionist leaders, particularly those not in agreement with the political tendencies of the present coalition government of Israel, are therefore not ready to entrust the future of world Jewry entirely to the Israeli political leadership. Fearful of the charge of dual allegiance if they act overtly, they can play only the card of economic power. Shades of the JNF box of my adolescence!

However, the fund-raising campaign bids fair to vanish as the content of Zionist endeavor. The reason is not to be found merely in the fact that, for a wide variety of reasons, UJA is past the peak of its fund-raising success, or even in the fact that Israel is coming to be viewed for the most part as another field of economic investment. What is more important is that economic aid to Israel is now no longer regarded as a Zionist activity. Last February the United Palestine Appeal, after a bitter losing fight by Dr. Silver and Dr. Neumann, became basically non-Zionist in character. Behind the opposition to Zionist control was felt the hand of the Israeli Labor party, which dominates the government. It seems increasingly evident to close observers that Israel is today quite willing to have done with old-time political Zionism. What the state wants is money, with no strings attached, and it prefers to get it through those Jewish leaders who will demand a minimum of political influence and accountability.

Inevitably, as a Zionist, I will look for content in the direction of cultural endeavor. The homeland has always been envisaged

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by an important body of Zionist theory as the center which would feed the spiritual energies of Jews the world over. The Hebraic values being revitalized and created by the renascent national culture would provide stimulation for all the Jewish world. This was the emphasis of Ahad Ha-am fifty years ago, when he struck off the phrase *zarat ha-Yahadut,* the survival of Judaism.

Talk about cultural Zionism is more fashionable today than it has been in many a year. Both the Zionist Organization of America and the Labor Zionist group in the United States have recently held important formal deliberations on the theme. At both these meetings the political and economic sides of Zionism were reaffirmed in the usual way, but cultural notes were sounded more emphatically than heretofore. In the Rifkind report of the ZOA, points 7 and 8 of a suggested program for American and world Zionism read as follows:

"7. To foster among the Jews of America self-awareness and a sense of kinship with Jews everywhere and stimulate Jewish cultural creativity.

"8. To encourage the spread of the Hebrew language and of Jewish culture among the Jewish youth and the Jewish population generally."

In its formal declaration, the National Assembly for Labor Israel also reaffirmed, from its pro-Mapai point of view, the political and economic motifs of Zionism, but in the third paragraph the cultural note was sounded: "Israel and American Jewry both face the necessity of reviving the tradition of Jewish culture in order to integrate into a more meaningful and organic relationship many Jews who are driven together or held together by circumstances. In this endeavor, it is essential for American Jewry to maintain a close bond with the developing culture of Israel, and in turn Jewish culture in Israel can gain in breadth and significance by constant attentiveness to Jewish cultural expression in America."

However, the whole discussion at the ZOA meeting was on whether the report was to be made binding on the convention or be referred to the next administration. The issues as such were not grappled with and there is not a word of elaboration about the cultural problem in the Rifkind report beyond the two short sentences of pious wish that I quoted above. The Labor Zionist session did hear a speech by Professor M. M. Kaplan, as a commentary on its paragraph on culture. He had several significant things to say, such as a strong disclaimer of any desire for large-scale American emigration to Israel, but on the cultural problem he was not very enlightening. He made again his well-known point about the "peoplehood" of world Jewry, its character as a cultural nation that can be sustained only by an act of group will. But how sustain the will in the group, when it is increasingly unwilling? Why sustain it at all? Is the existence of a Jewish Diaspora an end in itself?

So far the cultural discussion has been both skimpy and vague—and it leaves me, for one, quite cold. Jews in the Western democracies, particularly in America, have no great enthusiasm for becoming a cultural minority. The course of nationalism in our time is away from cultural pluralism in the post-World War I "minorities" pattern. There is no great likelihood that for Jewish national reasons American Jewry will swim upstream and steep itself in Hebrew language and Hebrew culture. Israeli national culture will be admired by world Jewry, but not really shared, for we are not in the mood for becoming artificial cultural irredentists.

Nor is it likely that the reservoir of Zionist energy will be siphoned off into the field of religion, for the simple reason that this field has long since been inundated. Cultural Zionism will surely suffer from its too great success in ideologically conquering the synagogue in the Diaspora. Zionist culture has become the predominant concern of the synagogue—to my mind to the neglect of the synagogue's spiritual responsibilities. And even despite this ideological homogeneity, Zionist organizations will not be graciously welcomed by religious institutions into the fields of Hebraic education, both youth and

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adult—institutions readily share ideas but are most reluctant to share jurisdictional authority.

In any case, an attempt to make Israel's religion—the plural, "religions," is really more correct—the norm for world Jewry and the tie that binds would be foredoomed to failure. The religious expressions of Israel today are either completely Orthodox or the mystique of nationalism. Neither of these Judaisms can possibly be made the norm for Jews of the Diaspora, who are increasingly heterodox and do not, at least in democratic countries, think of themselves as a national group.

The dilemma is painful: the religious and cultural uniformity that Jewry has been losing in the last two centuries must somehow be made to return now, if Jewish unity is to be preserved—and yet no one wants either a Vatican or a ghetto. The dilemma has been well known for a long time, but all that we have got from leaders of movements and schools of thought has seemed, at least "according to the poverty of my understanding," little more than descriptions of the problem and platitudes of hope.

There are two remaining possibilities for Zionist action which have been brought up in recent considerations. One suggestion, organized emigration to Israel, has really come from Israel, and only the second, civic-defense work, has been based on the realities of the Diaspora.

Everyone I talked with this summer in Israel asked, "When are you Americans coming to settle here?" For the Israelis, Zionism means only one thing—personal identification with the country. All else is mere verbiage. With complete candor David Ben Gurion, Premier of Israel, in a recent address to a visting delegation of American Zionists in Tel Aviv, expressed this sentiment: "Although we realized our dream of establishing a Jewish State, we are still at the beginning. Today there are only 900,000 Jews in Israel, while the greater part of the Jewish people is still abroad. Our next step will not be easier than the creation of the Jewish State. It consists in bringing all the Jews to Israel. . . . We appeal chiefly to the youth of the United States and other countries to help us achieve this big mission. We appeal to the parents to help us bring their children here. Even if they decline to help, we will bring the youth to Israel. . . ."

Zionist bodies in America have recently given some small support to the idea of emigration. The Rifkind report says in point 4 that the movement should "facilitate the immigration of Jews into Israel and encourage Halutz [pioneer] movements among the youth"—but I note, perhaps pedantically, that these clauses do not specifically say "American youth" and "American immigration." The Labor Zionists, though encouraging *halutziut* as a firm part of their traditional work, did not mention it at all in their declaration—and at the meeting Professor Kaplan denied the possibility of any large-scale success for such a movement. Those who know American Jewry agree with him. Obviously Zionism in America cannot generate mass enthusiasm, at this juncture, as a recruiting agency for emigrants.

THE civic-defense possibility is mentioned only in the Rifkind report, which in its very last point speaks of "cooperating with other organizations in defense of Jewish rights and other matters of common concern." This is really the newest and, in many ways, the most interesting note in the whole discussion. All major Jewish organizations have eventually come to be concerned with anti-Semitism, and to join that fight is the lowest common denominator of Jewish identification in the Diaspora.

Here, too, the Zionism of the future will have a hard road to travel. The movement has always centered its attention on Israel. It is true, as Zionist leadership is now increasingly insisting, that its interest in defense of Jewish rights the world over, wherever attacked, has always been great. Indeed the only world-wide organization in the field of civic defense, the World Jewish Congress, was created and fostered by Zionists between the two wars. Still, the Zionist attitude toward civic defense needs major revision before it can really make sense in America.

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In Zionist theory, anti-Semitism has always been not simply the enemy to be fought on home grounds; its existence—and its inevitable intensification in all lands outside Zion—has also been the "proof" that emigration to Palestine is the sole solution. That is why in America the fight against anti-Semitism was left to other agencies. European Zionism has always stood on Herzlian ground and regarded anti-Semitism as a sort of satanic ally in the creation of Israel—it would inevitably make the Jews go to the homeland. Even today the average Israeli still says to the American Jew: "Get out to Israel, before the day comes when you will be driven out." American Zionism has never really faced anti-Semitism on the level of theory. To have done so would have meant either to accept Herzl's viewpoint, which American Jews will not, or to split off on a basic matter from the rest of the movement and, in particular, its most important part, Israel.

A TRUE revision in Zionist theory is dependent not merely upon a crystallization of opinion among the Zionists of the Diaspora. It requires also an assent by the people of Israel. There can be no world-wide Zionist community—indeed no sense of an integrated Jewish world as a whole—until the various parts understand clearly what they stand for and how they are and can be related to each other. It is certainly too early to tell what will develop, but several trends are, to my mind, fairly clear.

1. The Jewish Agency as a political body is finished and it is now being refashioned as a colonization instrument in Israel and an agency for cultural interchange.

2. By the same token, the World Zionist Congress in its present form will soon be dissolved. Stripped of political factions, its successor will continue to work in the field of public relations under the domination of the Israeli government.

3. On the other hand, various Diaspora Zionist bodies, particularly the American, will become increasingly rebellious against Israel-centered programs. They will return to an old Zionist slogan, *Gegenwartsarbeit*, and make of the work in the present, on home ground, their most major interest.

4. The absorption of immigration into Israel will end in a year or two at most. Charity funds for Israel will correspondingly lessen.

Of course, all these individual points that I am making, and the others that could be made in this connection, revolve around a fundamental perception—that the Jew of the Diaspora and the Jew of Israel have today different cultures and different Jewish experiences. The experience of Israel, a nation in the making, is complex on the surface but in reality simple—it is the problem of getting on with the job. The problems of the Diaspora, under the tension of both Jewish and general spiritual allegiances, are rather less precise and more difficult. The Diaspora has chosen to live on as such. How to make it live on creatively and how to maintain inner identity between it and Israel—these are the most important questions that face us today.

I MUST return once again to my earliest symbols. The JNF box is still on my mantelpiece, but even after some years as a rabbi I do not like to ask others for money. The young man who led my Gordonia club is now still in the United States, still talking of the new life in Israel, but he has not moved there. The only image that has not tarnished for me is my grandfather. My Palestine-born cousins have inherited from him his strength in the face of hardship and adversity, his capacity to start over again after failure, his ingenuity. What remains to me is the echo of his piety, the *tefillim* he sent me for my Bar Mitzva and the books of homilies and tales of Hasidic saints that came in the same package. I know that this is the 20th century and it is in some circles bad form to look back, particularly to ghetto Jews. In spite of that perhaps we should. Perhaps all of us, Israelis and the rest, should start over again from our grandfathers to make of our Jewish experience the deepest of all emotions and the greatest of all ties. Perhaps together we might all become what we ought to be, their grandchildren.

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FROM LITTLE NEMO TO LI'L ABNER

Comic Strips as Present-Day American Folklore

HEINZ POLITZER

ON THE heels of the Truman election came the publication of Al Capp's *Life and Times of the Shmoo*. If, as has been said, Mr. Truman's victory was Franklin D. Roosevelt's greatest hour, then we can easily discern in the almost unprecedented success of Mr. Capp's comic-strip creation a revival of some of the basic ideas underlying the New Deal: the anti-trust spirit, love of the simple man and the underdog, optimism toned down by a thorough knowledge of reality.—"And so, side by side, the two li'l shmoos waddle off into the sunset, confident that they—and billions of their children—will live happily ever after." (But the bulk of the Shmoo nation had been wiped off the surface of the earth only a little while before.)

The Shmoo seems to have laid bare one of the emotional drives inherent in our democracy, and the pollsters might have done better to investigate the right funnies instead of the wrong statistics. However, there is a strain in the Shmoo that goes deeper than any single historical conjunction. "When yo' looks at a Shmoo as though yo'd like t'*eat* him—he *dies of sheer happiness*!!" (Italics and exclamation marks are Capp's.) The Shmoo is ready to immolate himself without any sense of sacrifice, simply out of overflowing love and helpfulness; and if the American people have adopted him for the moment as a sort of national symbol, they have voted for precisely this loving-kindness, which he represents with the exaggeration of a fairy tale.

The master, discoverer, and champion of the Shmoo is Li'l Abner. Li'l Abner is a Simple Simon, a Lucky Hans, a hillbilly. But he is also a giant-killer, the declared enemy of the strong and evil, with a stone for Goliath always ready in his sling. Behind his face stands another, more significant, face, and Coulton Waugh (in his book, *The Comics*) simplifies the matter when he attempts to reduce the resemblance to Henry Wallace. Li'l Abner is, in the unconscious depths of his being, a protestant; the world's injustice, which he senses more than perceives, leaves him no rest. At the same time, however, he preserves a confidence in the victory of the good, a remnant of the pioneer spirit. "The Lord—and Mammy Yokum—is with you, and He'll help you." America today is well mirrored—and gladly so—in Li'l Abner. In him is reflected our ardent avowal of youth, but also a rather stubborn attachment to crude juvenility; a sympathetic identification with the victorious simpleton, but also a certain indifference to the development of personality—the simpleton remains a simpleton.

For Li'l Abner is not only a hillbilly, a strong man and a roof-raiser, he is also an illiterate. And his creator wants him so. When, for some petty political reasons, Li'l Abner was excluded from the pages of the Pittsburgh *Press*, Al Capp was heard to com-

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THE comic strip—which began its career as a circulation builder for turn-of-the-century newspapers—is now an omnipresent element in our massive American popular culture, and has lately been the subject of much angry controversy. HEINZ POLITZER here examines the comic strip as a popular art form that in its own way illuminates some of the essential areas of American life and character. Dr. Politzer, a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY, was born in Vienna in 1910 and lived in Vienna and Prague until the time of the Anschluss. He emigrated to Palestine in 1938, and lived there for nine years. At present he teaches at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. His most recent contribution to these pages was the article "The Opportunity of the Jewish Museum" in the June issue. This article was translated from the German by Ralph Manheim.

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ment: "You know, one of my friends at the *Press* told me that when they left me out of the paper, they got fourteen thousand letters of protest. Who ever would have thought that so many people who like my strip are actually able to write?"

BENEATH this cynical utterance lies the businessman Al Capp's sober evaluation of the public whose daily spiritual bread he provides.

The comic strip of this century, like the *Biblia Pauperum* of the Middle Ages, works as an agent of civilization on an amorphous mass of readers not much more educated than the populace of those earlier times. The *New International Encyclopedia* gives the following information about the *Biblia Pauperum*: "A sort of picture book of the Middle Ages, giving on from forty to fifty leaves the leading events of human salvation . . . each picture being accompanied by an illustrative text or sentence in Latin. . . . Before the Reformation these books were very popular among both the clergy and the laity. Owing to their genuine popularity the printed copies were soon sold out. . . . The pictures. . . . were copied in sculptures, in wall and glass painting, . . . and thus became of importance in the art of the Middle Ages. . . ."

The pictures in the *Biblia Pauperum* were devised for the sake of their texts, but the pictures infringed more and more on the message and in the end made it superfluous. Historically, the dissemination of these books was one of the steps that led to schism in the Catholic church and the rise of Protestantism; it is easy to imagine a Roman cardinal, taken with foreboding, lifting his arms to hurl the anathema at these comic strips of his time (whether he later thumbed through them, we cannot tell). With these picture books, art began to abandon its place within the rigid structure of medieval society, changing not only its audience but also its themes and ultimately its function. The *Biblia* were the first harbingers, not of popular, but of bourgeois art.

Like the *Biblia Pauperum,* the comic strips are based on the picture, not on the word—on the *how,* not on the *what.* The dialogue, the "balloon," is but the intellectual excuse for a medium essentially visual; it is the pretext literate people console themselves with for reverting to the atavism of picture writing. But there can be no doubt that in this very atavism lie the effectiveness and the revolutionary possibilities of the comic strip.

TO BE sure, the comic strips, unlike their medieval predecessors, have no message to proclaim. They owe their immediate origin to capitalist competition—the newspaper feud between Hearst and Pulitzer in New York in the 1890's. From the outset they were used to attract circulation, and their syndication in 1913 by Moses Koenigsberg spread them over the whole continent. At first, the upper-class originators of the strips poured anything they pleased into them and translated it into a crass and primitive picture language. The comics were originally addressed to children, and since educators at the beginning of the century looked on children as small, stupid, and rough adults, the producers of the comics chose the sensational, the luridly fantastic, and the exotic —cruelty with a happy ending. And this, in the main, still remains the case. "Amoosin' but confoosin'," as Li'l Abner would say.

Addressed to the immature and to those of immature culture, to the dwellers in the side streets of contemporary civilization, the comics inevitably embody a threat. For they contain the revolutionary possibilities latent in all means of mass enlightenment. Underneath all the pedagogic, aesthetic, and moral arguments raised against the comics lies the unexpressed and usually unconscious fear that most responsible people feel in the face of any highly developed instrument for influencing the masses—and mixed in with this, perhaps, is a bad conscience for having thus far found no end appropriate to so potent a means.

Little Nemo and *Yellow Kid* revealed the condescension of the upper classes. But almost at once the audience of the comics began to project its own image into the thoroughly petty-bourgeois, suburban world of

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the comics. In so doing, they conformed, as in the *Katzenjammers*, to the stereotypes that the upper classes have of the lower: the Katzenjammer characters are completely naive, eager for adventures and happy endings; they are in fact a vulgarization of the Tom Sawyer motif, which was folksy enough in itself. It is only lately that the common man has reacted to the challenge of the comics by making them revelatory of his *true* nature. In the long run, the influence of the audience on the creators of the comic strip, and on their creatures, could not but leave its mark on this most democratic of art enterprises. Extending over the six plus one days of the week, exposed on every one of these seven days to the participation and criticism of its audience, the comic not only takes shape under the eyes of its public, the public takes shape along with it.

The originator provides the skeleton; the artist—who as often as not is also the originator—provides the flesh and clothing. Yet the comic strip owes its earthly existence, its fantasy, its adventurous idiom, its melodrama and shameless sentimentality, its awkward and well-concealed humanity, directly to its public. Instead of a message, the comic strip contains the mirrored image of its readers. Thus it is that the comics come to be the folk play of the American masses, produced on an infinitesimal stage built by the technical apparatus of the time for the needs of a mass public that breathes its own life into the end-product.

Accordingly, the comic-strip artist fulfills a function different from his less fortunate brothers in the free, non-applied "fine" arts. Indeed he may well be the only contemporary artist who *does* fulfill a function; the others, if not caught in the snares of an ideology, seem today only able to comment upon the problems arising from their disrupted communication with the public. Like his medieval colleague, the comic-strip artist has at least a path laid down for him in advance, and thus he is free to concentrate entirely on the formal aspect of his task. And since his work, once he is hired, is secure (almost as secure as that of the master-builder of a Gothic cathedral), he also has the leisure and the breathing space to keep on refining and perfecting it.

Like the artist of the *Biblia Pauperum* again, the comic-strip artist is essentially anonymous. The modern artist and his work feed on his biography, on the conflict in which he is embroiled with society. His name, the embodiment of his biography, is indispensable, and his work is to serve in establishing and maintaining his name in history. But in the comic strips the fictitious character is more important than the hand that draws it. It can survive its creator, change fathers. The new "authorship" may bring about certain small changes in line, composition, and characterization which the attentive reader may notice, but they make little difference in the general effect of the strip. Here if anywhere in modern art, the old concept of school and master has been revived. The art product has thrust aside the artist; the artist's style is no longer his unique signature but rather an embodiment of the taste of the times.

THE comic strips have developed two lines of evolution over the decades. One leads from *Little Nemo* to *Superman*, and represents what the industry as separate from the public considers suitable for mass consumption; it is *imposed*, reflecting the mood, the insight, and the cultural level of the entrepreneurs rather than of the audience. The other type, perhaps best exemplified by Walt Disney's *Mickey Mouse*, expresses the common-man comic-strip reader's sense of himself.

The art work in McCay's *Little Nemo* of 1906 has the bizarre baroque quality of American *fin de siècle*, the abstruse, imported beauty of the Hudson ferries and certain downtown subway stations. The representation of space is theatrical, the arrangement is that of an operetta or opera set. The color, highly differentiated out of regard for the printing techniques of that period, is full of the weary, satiated half-tones then popular in Europe.

Ignatz, on the other hand, the David who

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forever defeated Herriman's Krazy Kat and was the forerunner of Mickey Mouse, has the gaiety of the circus and of the small-town carnival, a vitality that drives the strip on from box to box. Here at last was the dynamic needed to make a strip a strip. The *Krazy Kat* strip is to *Little Nemo* as the movies to still photography. In order to remain intelligible, Herriman's dynamic figures require an optical concentration, an extreme simplicity as opposed to the vague overcrowding of McCay's static sketches.

Nemo is a dreamer, Ignatz and Mickey are creatures of action. Nemo is genteel, a cisatlantic cousin of Little Lord Fauntleroy; Mickey is a hopelessly immature small-towner, the little man of the people. The logical continuation of Little Nemo's dream world is the pseudo-scientific, pseudo-exotic world of *Buck Rogers* or *Flash Gordon,* strips that are obviously conceived as an assault on the nerves of their readers. The technical or scientific lore of these strips is there not to spread knowledge but to heighten tension by a merely *apparent* adjustment to reality; it is a technology not even limited by science. Utopia crowds out the reality of the day.

Ignatz needs no development. He stands there, round, bristling, impudent, and lewd. He heralds Mickey Mouse, but also the Sad Sack. He bears the imprint of a tradition that is older than the comic strip and extends far beyond the shores of America: the self-glorification of the little man through persiflage. He gives the strip folksiness, but also a true popular character. Originally he was conceived just as formally, or schematically, as other comic strip figures, but it turned out that the ordinary citizen was able to fill in Ignatz's outline with his own self-portrait. The principle of Ignatz's efficacy is not sensation but identification; he arouses less excitement than friendly recognition.

But the dividing line between suspense comics and funny comics is fluid. There are innumerable mixtures and conglomerates. Popeye with his seaman's Latin is a perfect take-off on the *Buck Rogers* type. But the parody is filled with its own kind of seriously intended melodrama. The *Little King* is a petty bourgeois in royal robes, his comedy derives from this antithesis. *Barnaby* is a hard-boiled realist, unimpressed in his encounters with the miraculous. (The fact that he is an American child accounts for his realism as well as his flair for the miracle, and sharpens both conflict and comedy.)

ANOTHER synthesis is represented by figures like Terry of *Terry and the Pirates* and Joe Palooka. They are conceived as stereotypes of what the masses now hold to be expressions of individuality; but, through the dialectic of the comic strip, they serve not only the interests of their manufacturer, but also the real life they claim to represent. In the course of the strips they define themselves personally as well as socially; they might indeed contain the possibility of furnishing characters for an American comedy, but the schematism of the strip that creates them deprives them of the breath of personality; Terry and Palooka are individualists in a huge crowd of individualists, as much alike as the houses in a suburban settlement. (America insists that all its citizens must be individualists, but all in the same way. What standardizes them is the very obstinacy with which they insist on their peculiarities, their hobbies, whimsies, and tics.)

But perhaps this contradiction is a motif of democracy as such. The comic strip grew out of the common man's urge to self-portraiture. It represents a compendium of the average American's modes of behavior in every stratum of American mass civilization for the last half-century. It is the comprehensive presentation of the general behavior of the American man, a history of manners.

The comics are less revealing when it comes to women. Here they have committed themselves to the French Doll, an expressionless mask in every conceivable costume. Woman has become a taboo, hidden behind a symbol. This would seem to indicate that American society, among the middle classes at least, is still predominantly masculine. The female character has life and individuality only when a woman does the drawings, as in Virginia Clark's *Oh, Diana.* Or the empty

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dream-figure that represents Woman becomes converted into its opposite and takes the shape of aggressive brutality, as in Popeye's Olive Oyl or in Maggie of *Bringing Up Father*. But here, too, the woman remains little more than a function of the male imagination.

I nearly forgot Mammy Yokum, the extraordinary mother of the extraordinary Li'l Abner. "Vaguely female," she is carved from the wood of the mandrake root; she is one of the great mothers who live on in the subconscious of the people, of every people. She is realistic and poetic in one. In this dwarfish, pipe-smoking, "vision conjurin'" matron, the people as such for the first time enter the American comic strip. Mammy Yokum stands in the background—or, rather, Li'l Abner is given a larger dimension proper to himself, like the saints in early medieval painting where everything incidental recedes—and yet it is she who fills the page after all; if she gives precedence to her son, she can well afford to do it, for she is the mightier of the two. Here we discern far more matriarchy and true feminocracy than in the pipe dreams of Blondie or Dixie Dugan.

Like all folk plays since the days of the ancient mime, the comic strip revolves around the stock figure. Intrinsically, the stock figure is the target of every possible identification, the schematic type into which every onlooker can project his own peculiarity, provided it does not shatter the general image. Through this projection, the stock figure is solidified and filled out, and achieves a kind of immortality; if, for technical reasons, it is removed from the stage of the comics, its departure becomes a public loss. That is why the comic strip, in its typical form, can afford to be as tedious, for example, as a novel by Dickens—where the reader also feels at home because the art is as slow and devious as life and shows him his own experience as he himself conceives of it.

Nameless as the creator of the strip may be, the name of his main character is vital; sometimes indeed the name is the whole content of the character. The register of names and destinies extends from Alley Oop to Yanitor Yens Yensen. Sometimes a name proves completely successful, as with the Katzenjammers, who carry the whole origin, atmosphere, and dynamic of their existence in their name. The German descent of the Katzenjammers not only contributes an invaluable linguistic touch; it is as though the strip wished to recall its own descent from the European picture book—in the case of the Katzenjammers from Max and Moritz, the bad boys of the inspired sadist Wilhelm Busch. Or a character's occupation may be added to reinforce his name in establishing his personality and often foreshadowing his destiny.

It is here that Abie the Agent comes in. Abie Kabibble is as Jewish as the Katzenjammers are German: in him the ethnic minority enriches the American scene by the peculiarity of its speech, mentality, and group character. Abie is a *shlemiel* and a realist, outrageously sentimental and stubbornly matter-of-fact, the wandering Jew taking a short rest in the suburbs of the world. But the suburbs are those of pre-World War I America. Abie shows neither complacency nor self-hatred; his flat feet have plodded into reality and there he has settled down. He is the general underdog, proclaiming the philosophy of the socially underprivileged. He, too, is the last, the best of all the game. In his mouth, to be sure, this assurance has a faintly ironic ring.

Abie the Agent is the explicit contribution of American Jewry to the comic strip. Elsewhere, Jews function more as a leaven and a seasoning. Such artists as Rube Goldberg season the general trends with their wit rather than reflect themselves. And with Alfred Gerald Caplin who is Al Capp, American Jewry demonstrates its advanced position in American society. Al Capp has only to express in his strip his own desires, drives, and anxieties—like, say, Saul Steinberg in his cartoons—in order to answer the desires, drives, and anxieties of all his contemporaries, regardless of variety of origin or creed. By their very names, Abie and Li'l Abner

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show the stages in the path American Jews have followed in integrating themselves in the context of American civilization.

In its names, the strip often parodies the mystic possibilities of nomenclature, sometimes in a way that is positively thematic, as after the birth of Toots and Casper's Buttercup. But it also exploits the magic of names: in alliterations like *Donald Duck*, in rhymes like *Silly Milly* (who is by no means silly; with her, as with the Marx Brothers, the nonsensical sometimes borders on revelation); or in the pun, as in *Claire Voyant* or *Ella Cinders* (=Cinderella). Or the name is eliminated and gives way to the situation, as in *Mr. and Mrs.* or *Bringing Up Father*—both relatively early products. But there the artist intervenes, substituting for the name the graphic formula of a physiognomy.

The faces and figures of the comic strip, like the names, are abbreviations of characters and lives. *Yellow Kid* and *Little Nemo* are still, from the point of view of graphic characterization, nameless and indistinct; the scene is smothered in detail. The umbilical cord attaching them to English book illustration and to stage design has not yet been cut. But *Mutt and Jeff* already has that clarity of outline, that economy of stroke, and that forceful grouping of light and dark surfaces which characterize the good comic strip and are essential to its speed.

Living parasitically on the body of contemporary civilization, the comic strip has sucked in as much of the art of the century as it could digest. It contains traces of impressionism and even of abstract art. (The concentrated form of abstract art is perhaps best suited to its essential character, if only the comic strip artist is intelligent and bold enough to discern this essential character.)

Picture language is symbolical by nature, accepted as the reality for which it has been substituted. In thus replacing reality, it creates a circle of the initiated who are united by the symbol they have accepted in common. This principle applies no less to the admirers of Picasso's "Guernica" than to the fans of Crocket Johnson's *Barnaby*. Strips like this last, or Otto Soglow's *Little King* or Disney's more advanced works, or even Hoff's *Tuffy*, show how readily the symbol as a pictorial element, no matter what liberties it takes with nature, can be accepted and understood by the public at large.

These strips also demonstrate the possibilities of modern non-objective art for popular consumption. All commissars to the contrary notwithstanding, realism and mass appeal are not identical; indeed, the intelligent selection and use of artistic symbols can make realistic detail appear not only superfluous but actually disturbing. From the artistic point of view, Paul Klee's "Twittering Machine" and Barnaby's Atom Machine for the manufacture of shoes have at least their remoteness from reality in common — except that Barnaby's fantastic contraption is placed within an accepted context, while Klee's exists in the glacial solitude of a violet vision. In the comic strip, the masses have begun to approach art and the dream and to put them to work for their own civilization.

Many comics are drawn with the left hand, the dreamer. To be sure, this dream is still unarticulated and heavily encumbered with the trappings of daily life; diffuse and awkward, stammering and drunk with sleep, it staggers along, then again it grows shrill and phantasmagoric, and always it remains in the fetters of business, of the syndicates.

Yet the comics, having risen from unconscious depths, must needs address themselves to the unconscious depths in their public. Graphically, they are derived from "doodles," those glosses that the unconscious, once it knows itself to be free from control, writes in the margin of the wideawake day. Doodles are the safety valve through which the soul liberates itself from the tension of concentration, the back door by which the creative urge, which has no recognized place in the economy of the American working day, sneaks out of doors. Moreover, since the successful comic figure openly proclaims its descent from the doodle, the reader can identify himself not only with the figure but with its creator as well: he might have drawn it himself.

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RARELY have so many identified themselves so profoundly with anything so vague. Consider Superman. He has hardly more than his name in common with Nietzsche's blasphemous and iconoclastic phantasm; in fact one suspects that he originally owed his "super" to the "super-duper," the "ne plus ultra and then some" of advertising usage. This Superman is a Li'l Abner without Mammy Yokum and without popular background, a hillbilly without the fertile background of folklore or remnants of creed. He is a Goliath rather than a David, but a Goliath who has joined the side of the conventionally right. The most serious objection to him I have heard from the mouth of a child: that he is immortal, and therefore the amazing things he does are not miracles.

The emblem of his supermanhood is inscribed on his chest, not on his forehead. He is as guileless as Li'l Abner, but he lacks the primitiveness of the country boy; the old magic that flows from the contrast between city and country is missing. Li'l Abner is at home in Dogpatch, Superman in the universe—that is, nowhere. Superman is on the side of the right as well as of hygiene. He uses violence against violence. His eyes penetrate granite walls and steel plates, but he does not see what Mickey Mouse always sees: reality. Planets serve him and the elements lie at his feet, but in the main his accomplishments are limited to smoking out a small gang of criminals or outsmarting some master mind. The mountain labors and—with the help of modern technology—brings forth a stunt.

An example of the irony unintentionally provided by Superman is the sequence in which he magnanimously carries away a glacier in order to help a village with its drainage problem. His work done, he has to bring a new glacier from the North Pole, because nature, which *non facit saltus,* plays a trick on the winged lord of creation and floods the village. Superman has about him something of Goethe's Sorcerer's Apprentice, of Dr. Faust, of Hercules, and of Atlas. To be sure, Jules Verne and H. G. Wells also make their contribution to his costume and trappings, but essentially he owes his effect to the vanishing remnants of ancient mythology, that collective memory of mankind which has here been combined with utopian anticipation. He does not *embody* all this, for Superman has never achieved such density of personality as Li'l Abner, for example, but he does draw constantly from a plentiful, if shallow, reservoir of watered-down myths and pipedreams of the future.

Superman is a product of the last war, the shadowy but legitimate son of the Hitlerian age and the atom bomb. Although, as we have stressed, he comes in the wake of a long tradition, it is upon the miracle of technology that he finally calls in situations that can no longer be met with the implements of reality. The *deus ex machina* has become the *machine god.* Superman is the boy's dream in pictures, but through the dehumanization of the miracle and the substitution of technical for poetic fantasy, his face has acquired a terrifyingly unhuman, aggressive, and hard profile, foreshadowing a world in process of formation, a world that is certainly new but far less brave than it thinks and claims to be. Seen politically, Superman is the promise that each and every world problem will be solved by the technical trick. He is the Man of Tomorrow; so he says himself.

Fritz Lang, to whom the American film owes a number of real achievements, made two films in pre-Hitler Germany that show symptomatic resemblances to Superman: *Die Nibelungen,* whose Siegfried resembled our hero in build and physiognomy—bull neck and a blank face moulded of some soft substance; and *Metropolis,* whose setting is related to the background of the Superman strips—a city on the borderline between modern civilization and pseudo-scientific Utopia. Like Superman, Lang had caught the *Zeitgeist.*

MYTHS crumble, heroic figures can be watered down, but symbols and names cannot be used with impunity. And even though this bashful, amiable Superman is to the petty *Übermensch* who unleashed the

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Second World War as Robin Hood to a storm trooper, they have one thing in common: they both blur the transition from the technically possible to the miraculous-irrational, their efficacy rests on the vague hybridism of heroism and Utopia, of technology and the miracle.

Superman announces himself the ally of right, the people, and democracy. Prankster is his enemy, Lynch is a thorn in his side; he issues forth to vanquish the *tyrannosauros rex,* as Siegfried did to slay his dragon. But his credo, like the "balloon" in which he expresses it, is loosely attached and interchangeable. It is not the natural expression of himself, like Li'l Abner's far more modest self-avowals. He has merely put on his credo like his winged cloak. He lacks human reality; is it not precisely his mission to abolish reality?

Superman, in fact, is a figure of dual identity. He slips from the civilian clothes of his everyday life into the ceremonial garb of his miraculous deeds and back again; he is a quick-change artist, and even more amazing than the ease of his metamorphoses are his trifling reasons for undertaking them. But the dual identity motif is the schema of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde—a pattern bordering on that of the pathological swindler and criminal. For a popular figure, it is not without its dangers. The double face and the split personality are symptoms of a disease that has attacked our civilization. And, more often than not, it is also an attribute of modern dictators, perhaps of the tyrants of all epochs.

Superman has become anchored in those sections of the population that are most naive, most capable of enthusiasms, and most susceptible to revolutionary impulses. By the technique — general in the comics — of breaking off the text just before the climax, by creating new climaxes almost from day to day, it creates an excitement close to enchantment and frenzy. A toy, a puppet, Superman is a monstrous carnival figure combined of wishful dreams and present anxieties, of sensationalism and abused enthusiasm. Accustomed to change his identity, Superman has it in him to become a political figure. To play with him is to play with the dynamite of our times.

I do not know whether the comics are popular or folk art, primitive or "primitivistic" art; I do not even know whether the word "art" is in any sense applicable to them as they are today. But they are surely a democratic enterprise. An immanent need of the masses presided at their birth and helped to develop and round out their figures.

Accordingly, it is reassuring to see that after our entry into the war, the Superman of 1938 was followed by George Baker's *Sad Sack.* Sad Sack is not an unmixed joy to his public like the hero and swindler of the air. He is a little man in the lineage of Charlie Chaplin, and he is the little man's answer to the pathos and uniform of war. He is molded of clay, not blown up with air: an American Good Soldier Schweik, less subtle and malicious than Schweik (he ultimately accepts the cause for which he is fighting as *his* cause), but just as stubborn in asserting the rights of his private existence, which as a rule is identical with personal misfortune. The *shlemiel* and Hard Luck Joe is a healthy corrective to the unfettered pipedream of the masses; it is perhaps the only corrective that is possible throughout the whole breadth of our civilization.

We must see the comic strips for what they are: excellent means of communication. America has produced in them a technical miracle: precise, smooth-functioning, versatile, and, like everything that is technically perfect, always demanding new technical refinement. Absorbed in the production of this miraculous vehicle of modern communication, America has seldom asked herself who was going to ride in it and where it was bound for.

Every once in a while, when Americans take a good look at this product of theirs, they are seized by a fit of the shivers and feel almost that the best solution would be to throw the baby out with the bath. Aside from the fact that it would be impossible to prohibit the comics — everybody knows that, and the idea itself is merely a means of mak-

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ing conversation—such a step would deprive this country of one of the genuine contributions it has made to its own culture. America without comics would not be America.

It is, therefore, as shortsighted as it is ungrateful to see in the comic strip nothing but an incitement to crime and violence, and to forget, because of the magnetic emptiness of Superman and his like, the ironical urbanity of the Shmoo. Art has always had a certain similarity to the cactus. Many thorns are needed to produce, in a blessed moment, the blossom that crowns them all. The undeniably thorny horrors of the Gothic tales were needed to create a European poem like Byron's *Manfred*.

The violent controversies between psychoanalysts and other educators over the comic strips are likely to obscure the basic problem they pose. How can we channel the revolutionary possibilities inherent in this—hitherto almost aimless—means of mass entertainment and mass enlightenment so that a maximum of art is combined with a maximum of edification; how can we realize and develop the artistic possibilities latent in the comics even today? How can we rescue them in general from that complete lack of significant content which has vitiated so much real talent? In the end all these problems become one. In view of the latent powers of the comics as a means of social criticism and of their enormous circulation and technical perfection, what they still lack is the artistic genius to control these forces and drive them towards a goal.

Li'l Abner and his Mammy Yokum are about as far removed from the creative origins of real popular art as they are from realizing the artistic potential of the comic strip as such. Yet they are on their way, perhaps, to that realization, and have already found some good companions among the menacing crowd of slick and sloppy nightmares let loose by the syndicates on the imagination of the nation.

"I was sick of writing for kids, and adults with the minds of kids," condescending and calculating Al Capp meditated one day. "I got to know all the dirty tricks, and I knew that if I experimented and lost a great section of the featherbrained, Bam!-and-Zowie!-loving public, I could always go back to them. But I also knew that by experimenting I might get some of the usually non-comic-reading public – the people who had been appalled by the childishness and utter stupidity of most strips."

The future of the American comic strip as an artistic as well as a moral enterprise lies in meditations like these.

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THE SHOOTING ON THE MOEHLSTRASSE

Is It Nazi Anti-Semitism All Over Again?

NORBERT MUHLEN

IN AUGUST the world press excitedly reported that the Moehlstrasse in Munich had been the scene of the "worst anti-Semitic outbursts since Hitler." Most dispatches gave the impression that a Munich newspaper had published an anti-Semitic item, and that Jewish DP's who assembled to protest against it were run down and shot at by the Munich police. Here was the avenue leading to a new Auschwitz! This was alarming news indeed. As it happened, I was close at hand before, during, and after the events on the Moehlstrasse. What actually occurred was rather different from and considerably more complicated than what the correspondents reported.

To get at the real story, we must go back a bit. In the essentially rural city of Munich, the Moehlstrasse was once a pleasant little street of semi-suburban, well-to-do villas. Only four blocks long and bordering on the Isar river, it recalled in its character and appearance the streets in New York City's Washington Heights and Inwood sections, where college professors, doctors, and manufacturers reside, overlooking the Hudson and seemingly far away from Manhattan. Its new career began after the surrender, when the international relief organizations for DP's of Jewish and other origins were billeted in requisitioned houses of the Moehlstrasse and its neighborhood. In their thousands, people from the European East and Southeast, swept to Germany by the tides of war, came to these offices in search of immediate help and a more promising future.

The little streets around the offices soon became the meeting place and the market place of the DP's. They stood around in the street, exchanged rumors, gossip, information, made deals of all sorts among themselves, and soon also with the German population. In the black market of the first postwar years, such rare goods as cigarettes, coffee, food of all sorts, could be bought at the Moehlstrasse, as everybody in Munich knew.

Today, the overwhelming majority of the DP's have left the country, most of them for Palestine, some for America or other overseas countries. But a minority remains, still centering around the Moehlstrasse, which has become a strange new settlement, a booming shack-town such as those in the America of the goldrush years.

The Moehlstrasse and the four little streets leading to it are now shopping streets where you can buy almost everything. But the "stores" are a little different from the usual run of shops. Some of them consist only of a table crudely set up on the street, with some merchandise spread out on it and the rest hidden in a cheap suitcase over which the owner stands guard. The next stage of economic progress is marked by an umbrella protecting the goods and the salesman, perhaps with a cart replacing the more primitive table. The next shop may have a primitive booth around the table, giving the first hint of a real store. Then a display window is

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THERE is a widespread and certainly understandable apprehension at the possibility of a resurgence of Nazi anti-Semitism in Germany. And when the recent report of a clash between Jewish DP's and German police in Munich made the front pages of the world's press, these fears were vigorously stimulated. NORBERT MUHLEN, who was in Munich during this incident, here supplies a first-hand report that throws a new light on the "battle of the Moehlstrasse." Mr. Muhlen is the author of *Schacht: Hitler's Magician* (1939) and *Starving Them to Death* (1939). His most recent contribution to COMMENTARY was "Comic Books and Other Horrors" in the January 1949 issue.

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added, and often a small back-room is finally built and the raw wooden structure improved into a small concrete hut. In the Moehlstrasse, one can find all these types standing side by side, in free competition and unsystematic mixture, demonstrating like a living museum the development of retailing from trading posts to modern stores.

With the disappearance, since the currency reform, of shortages of consumer goods on the German market, the Moehlstrasse no longer specializes in luxury items unobtainable elsewhere, but in cut-rate prices on a large variety of goods, which attract shoppers from all over Munich, especially the poor. Food stores dominate, offering everything from Argentinian corned beef to French liqueurs; in several windows I saw a display of tins of American cocoa with the label "A Gift from the American Jews," and the name of a well-known American relief organization. There are also many stores selling silverware, clothing, shoes, and furs. From early morning to late evening trading goes on between men who speak Yiddish, Polish, Ukrainian, and Latvian, and their customers who answer in the Bavarian dialect. Every few steps in the Moehlstrasse neighborhood, one runs into a little group of men who in a more secretive manner than that of the shopkeepers are trading bills and banknotes of all countries.

The newsstands at the corners display, besides Hungarian, Russian, and Polish refugee papers, the three weekly Yiddish papers which are published in Munich, and which reflect the political parties of Palestine: there is a Social Democratic, a Mapam, and a General Zionist publication, all written, printed, and sold in Munich.

I talked with several shopkeepers and traders from the Moehlstrasse a few days before it made the headlines of the world press. Most of them did not want to leave Germany because they saw better business opportunities here than anywhere else in the world. A few of them had already done very well, and hoped to do still better. A few others wanted to save money so they could emigrate overseas with sufficient capital. There was a young Jew from Poland who had survived the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp, had studied medicine after the war in Holland, had an immigration visa to the United States, and planned to go there as soon as he had earned the ten thousand dollars which, his relatives had written to him, one needs to get started as a doctor in America. There was an elderly man from Latvia who sold silver candlesticks and cigarettes; he had heard that people were starving in the States, that business was bad in Palestine, and he was quite happy here in the Moehlstrasse for the time being. Most of the Moehlstrasse men, uprooted from their former homes, able to survive only by highly developed toughness, and without family and community ties, had the understandable view that they had a moral right to get the best out of life, and especially out of Germany. Except for the exchange of goods and money, there was hardly any contact between them and the German population. They distrusted each other, but found each other economically useful. The Munich people disliked the Jews as probably every rural society dislikes a group of foreigners, whether they be Swedish farmers coming to a New England town or Prussian refugees from Soviet persecutions coming to Bavaria.

Withal, there was no actual hostility between the two groups. This was confirmed to me by Munich police officials a few days before the Moehlstrasse riot. Six policemen were all that was needed to patrol this neighborhood, while a larger number had to be sent to other, tougher districts of the city. The director of the Munich police laughed when I asked whether he expected any trouble in the Moehlstrasse.

Now for the more immediate background of the August events. In the last days of July 1949, John J. McCloy, the newly-appointed United States High Commissioner in Germany, met in Heidelberg with American and German leaders in charge of Jewish problems in the occupied areas. In his speech McCloy asserted that the gauge

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of the democratic re-education of Germany would be the development of a new attitude on the part of the Germans toward the Jews. Taking up this point, the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, a large morning newspaper published in Munich and one of the first to have been licensed by American Military Government, published a long editorial stressing Mr. McCloy's statement, elaborating on it from the German view, and strongly condemning any form of social or subconscious anti-Semitism which its readers might consider "legitimate." The editorial was written and signed by Mr. E. W. Sueskind, one of the editors of the newspaper and a writer with a long-established literary reputation.

One week later, the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* printed in its Letters-to-the-Editor column four letters referring to the editorial; three strongly approved of its message, while a fourth objected to it in vitriolic language. It told the Jews to "go to America, but there they don't have any use for you, they too are fed up with these blood-suckers. I'm employed by the American occupation authorities, and some of them have already said to me that they forgive us everything but that we haven't gassed all of the Jews, who are now enjoying themselves in America. . . ." The letter went on explaining that "we"—those who think about the Jews like the writer of the letter—"are a very small circle. . . . Please publish my letter if you're really a 'democrat.'"

Mr. Sueskind, who at the time was himself in charge of the letters column, published the letter, thinking of it as an educational document. He only shortened it by crossing out the introduction in which the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* was asked to "disappear from Europe since you scoundrels and gangsters are only parasites," and in which he himself, as the writer of the original editorial, was told: "You too are a Jew. Get out of Europe, for in twenty years it'll be too late for you." In short, Mr. Sueskind, by publishing the letter in which he and his newspaper were so viciously attacked, tried to act as our American press does, opening its columns to the free expression of opinion. However, he did not note that the signature under the letter, "Adolf Bleibtreu, Muenchen 22, Palestinastrasse 33," was a transparent pseudonym; in translation it means "Adolf, Remain Faithful, Palestine Street," and "33" was the year in which Hitler came to power. He did not check the address of the signer, which later turned out to be fake, nor did he think of adding a preface or reply to the letter. In short, he acted like a very democratic, though perhaps sloppy and incompetent, editor. As it happened, the two executive editors of the paper who might have handled the matter more sensibly were abroad.

The news of the publication of the letter soon reached the Moehlstrasse, where German newspapers are not usually read. A crowd of two to three hundred offended Jews gathered immediately, and decided to march on the offices of the "Nazi paper" and smash or burn them. Their belief was that it was the editorial opinion of the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* rather than that of a letter to the editor that "all the Jews should be gassed." (Some of them still think so.)

American Military Government in Germany has a ruling that all public meetings and demonstrations have to be licensed by it. Here was undoubtedly a case of a spontaneous, unlicensed demonstration. Spokesmen of the Jewish Committee which represents the DP's tried to talk the demonstrators out of their undertaking, but to no avail. The six Munich policemen on duty also tried to stop the demonstration, but were swept away by the very excited crowd.

WHEN this crowd had moved on a few blocks to the Statue of the Angel of Peace, which stands at the point where the Moehlstrasse district leads to the main part of the city, it had grown to more than seven hundred and fifty in number. Here Munich city police tried again to stop them, again in vain. At this moment, a detachment of Munich city mounted policemen arrived and galloped toward the advancing mass. They were greeted by a volley of stones taken from the war ruins which surround the Angel of Peace.

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Precisely what happened in the next decisive minutes cannot be established with absolute reliability. It is certain that at least one policeman, perhaps more, drew his gun and fired into the crowd. It is also certain that the police had not received permission or orders from the superior officers in charge to use their guns. The policeman declared later that he was surrounded by a threatening crowd trying to disarm him and beat him up, and that he acted in self-defense. On the other hand, the Jews wounded by his shots were wounded from behind, which at least shows that they were not the attackers, unless the policeman shot blindly into the crowd. A short battle followed, fought with clubs by police, with stones and sticks by the Jews. Only a very few German civilians were seen taking part in the fight on the side of the police; even fewer Germans participated in the fight on the Jewish side, one of them a Bavarian woman whose son had been executed by the Nazis as a political enemy—she happened to be shopping in the Moehlstrasse when the excitement began.

In the next thirty minutes, two companies of Military Police of the United States Army were rushed to the scene and drew a cordon between the Jews and the Munich police; American officers, among them a Jewish army chaplain, and an executive of a Jewish relief organization, spoke to the Jews from loudspeakers mounted on trucks and asked them to disperse. When quiet was finally restored, at least six Jews had been hurt by shots, and six more Jews beaten up; the police officers said that twenty-six men of their force were wounded. There were no deaths. The investigation which ensued and in which the Bavarian Chief Rabbi, the leaders of the Jewish Community of Bavaria, and the Jewish political representative in the government participated, led to the finding that "no anti-Semitic tendencies had played a part in the Munich police force." The German press, which, of course, does not necessarily reflect German public opinion, protested without exception against the mistake of publishing a letter which was so likely to lead to misunderstanding, defended the Jewish demonstrators, and admonished their readers and countrymen to purge themselves of anti-Semitic feelings if they still had any.

As I write this, life in the Moehlstrasse goes on as usual. The cops on duty, the Bavarian shoppers, and the displaced shopkeepers have taken up their old rounds. A new Jewish coffee-house has been opened, a few new stores are being built around the old sales tables, and cigarettes are still sold fifty pfennigs cheaper than in the city shops, which means more to a Munich smoker than any editorials in his favorite morning newspaper.

WHAT really happened in the Moehlstrasse seems to have been one of those sudden outbursts of mass hysteria that explode once in a while when there is a state of underground tension between what social psychologists call an "in-group" majority and an "out-group" minority. Ethnically, socially, economically, in language and social status, the displaced Jews of the Moehlstrasse undoubtedly form a typical out-group. The mere mention of the word "gassing," and of Nazi atrocities, is likely to startle the Jews into a precipitate reaction; foreigners in a country which they fear and which distrusts them, they can hardly be expected to react rationally to such incitement.

If the attitude of the Germans to these Jews can be called anti-Semitic, it must be added that this present anti-Semitism bears little resemblance, on the whole, to the anti-Semitism of the Nazis, nor does it seem to be, as is so often claimed, a recrudescence of it. It is anti-Semitism of a newer—and yet older—breed.

Before Hitler, there were approximately five hundred thousand Jews in Germany; almost ninety per cent of them had been born there, and the families of many had lived in Germany for one or more centuries. Today there are fifty thousand Jews living in Germany; of these, twenty thousand are German Jews, while the remaining thirty thousand are foreigners, the residue of the DP's, approximately ten thousand of whom live in the Moehlstrasse district. The German his-

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torian Mommsen once referred to the Jews as "another German tribe"; today they are, admittedly and undoubtedly, a very foreign tribe in the midst of the Germans.

When I discussed the Jewish question with Germans in Bavaria and Franconia, I noted on several occasions the odd comment: "What a mess the Fuehrer made—he hounded away our good Jews, and now we have instead the bad Jews." One elderly woman in Frankfurt, after telling me how she had hidden her Jewish neighbors for a year until she was denounced and brought to a concentration camp, advised me with friendly concern that I should not walk alone late at night on the Bahnhofstrasse, the Moehlstrasse of Frankfurt, since "the Jews" there were dangerous people who attacked strangers and robbed them. A pastry-baker in Fuerth, who had been sent to jail because he brought his fresh pastry as a gift every day to the house in which the old Jews of Fuerth were kept prisoners by the Nazis, explained to me that it was a *selbstverstaendlich* act for him to do so; but a little later he had hard words for the Jews in a nearby displaced persons camp. But in Schwaebisch-Gmuend, significantly, where there had been a DP camp with Polish Jews who had later been succeeded by non-Jewish Poles, a delegation of the mayor and the citizens of the town asked the authorities whether they could not have back the former inmates, the Polish Jews, rather than the newcomers; the former were still less foreign, and therefore less dreaded, than the latter!

WHAT seems to have happened is that "Jewish" has become synonymous with "foreign" in the new German imagery. Conversely, the twenty thousand native German Jews still living in Germany—most of them people who somehow managed to survive the Third Reich with the help of their non-Jewish friends or relatives, while a few others are re-immigrants—have more or less ceased to be considered as Jews by the Germans. Two candidates of purely Jewish origins—in Hamburg and in Hanau—were elected as delegates to the new Bundes-Parliament in Bonn this August; in the election campaign, tough and vicious though it was, no anti-Semitic arguments were used against them. The Secretary of Justice in a North-German British-occupied *Land,* the Secretary of Finance in the biggest city of Western Germany, the president of the Bar Association in Northern Bavaria—all are of Jewish descent and have never been attacked on racial or religious grounds. A high official in the West Berlin police, who returned to her job after surviving a Nazi concentration camp and whose Jewish descent is generally known, told me that occasionally policemen report to her on raids against "the Jews," by which they mean the blackmarket centers of Jewish DP's, without realizing that they are talking to a "Jew."

True, there are some traces, often bizarre, of anti-Semitic Nazi doctrine still to be spotted in the minds of people who often consider themselves anti-Nazis. Talking in trains, in inns, and in coffee-houses with people who took me for another German, I was told quite a few times: "We lost the war in November 1938 when Hitler burned the Jewish synagogues. That brought upon us the revenge of World Jewry." Oddly, this was said without any hate, and even with an appreciation of the right of "World Jewry" to "retaliate." Many, when they saw from my reaction that I disagreed with them, thought it was their criticism of the orders of the Fuehrer to which I objected, took me for a Nazi, and gave me quite a lecture. A German driver in Berlin, to whom I made a remark on the ruins of the Kurfuerstendamm before our eyes, answered: "Yes, that's where the Jews lived before the war. They specially instructed the American bombers to bomb their former houses first." When I said that I thought things were different, he replied excitedly: "You don't know how furious the Jews were against Hitler—perhaps you don't even know what Hitler did to them."

IN DECEMBER 1939, a few months after the outbreak of the war, the German Catholic philosopher Theodor Haecker noted in his secret diary, published posthumously after

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the war: "One may assume that the Germans, consciously or subconsciously, will do everything to forget as quickly as possible about what is being said, written, and done today in Germany. Memories of guilt are lasting, therefore they are painful. Man gets rid of them whenever he can. But God has still to decide whether he can."

What one lonesome German secretly scribbled down at night in his diary may explain why ten years later, when I mentioned the six million Jewish dead, I almost invariably got evasive answers from well-meaning average people, such as: "I still can hardly believe that there were men in Germany able to do *such* things." *Such* things are rarely mentioned in Germany today, except by small circles of political or religious leaders; ignorance and disbelief of *such* things appear as the defense mechanism of the "little" man who does not feel himself responsible for the deeds of his government, about which he yet feels helpless and guilty. It might well be that the next generation which has no cause to feel personally responsible about such things of the past may develop a healthier attitude.

As far as can be observed today, the "Jewish question," and the *Weltanschauung* of anti-Semitism, find no room in the minds and the interests of the very young generation—simply because they seem too far removed from the reality of their lives. The experiences of their lifetime—the war and the bombings, the surrender and the breakdown of the order they took for granted, the hunger of the postwar years—were all too traumatic to leave any room for a question which seems as academic and antiquated to them as the problem of the Jews. Whenever I hinted at the problem in many talks with students, schoolchildren, young workers in many parts of Germany, I got a reply which concerned only the Moehlstrasse (or whatever the local DP center was), the black market, the presence of foreigners. "The Jewish question? Well, don't you think there is something wrong with the way *they* live here?"

IN SUM, although images and ideas taught by the Nazis certainly survive, the main current of anti-Semitism in Germany today does not have the framework of a racist philosophy, the strength of a political doctrine which it had before. It is, more simply, the antagonistic reaction of people against an ethnically and economically foreign group. In this, it revives exactly the European attitude toward the Jews before the Enlightenment, when there was also a very small, very foreign group of "Jews" living among the peoples, doing business with them, selling commodities and exchanging money in more expert ways than their native competitors, but living thoroughly apart from them, in hypertrophied *commercium* and without *connubium*.

A long time before Moses Mendelssohn opened the spiritual intermarriage between Germans and Jews, a very long time before Heinrich Heine and Ludwig Boerne appeared as masters of the German language and of German thought, the Jews lived in Germany exactly as the displaced Jews do today, looking back to recent martyrdom, a foreign tribe against whom occasional outbursts and riots flared up.

The Jews in Germany today stand where they stood two hundred years ago, as if there had been no Hitler—or rather because there has been a Hitler.

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THE JEWISH WRITER AND THE ENGLISH LITERARY TRADITION

A Symposium: Part II

THE editors of COMMENTARY asked twenty writers to discuss their reactions, as writers and readers, to the continuing presence of the sinister "Jew" in English literature, a problem discussed in Leslie Fiedler's article, "What Can We Do About Fagin?" in our May issue. The question to which they were asked to address themselves was phrased thus:

"As a Jew and a writer working within the Anglo-American literary tradition, how do you confront the presence in that tradition of the mythical or semi-mythical figure of The Jew, as found, for example, in the works of such writers as Chaucer, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Walter Scott, Trollope, T. S. Eliot, Evelyn Waugh, Thomas Wolfe, Henry Adams, etc.? Do you find this an important block or barrier to your full participation and integration, as a writer or a person, in the literary or cultural tradition involved? In what ways, if any, does this constitute a problem for you, and how do you deal with it, or think it should be dealt with? If you do not find it a problem or think it a problem, why not?"

In our September issue the comments of the following writers appeared: William Phillips, Paul Goodman, Louis Kronenberger, David Daiches, Isaac Rosenfeld, Stanley Edgar Hyman, Diana Trilling, Howard Nemerov, Stephen Spender, and Harold Rosenberg; this is the second and concluding instalment of the symposium.—ED.

Philip Rahv: Twenty or even ten years ago the problem posed by the editor of COMMENTARY might have struck most of us as rather far-fetched, to say the least, if not altogether worked-up in an artificial way by over-wrought Jewish nerves. At this time, however, this problem can no longer be shrugged off. Anti-Semitism is patently on the increase in the literary world; and it is the neo-Christian revival in literature, as Leslie A. Fiedler indicates in his recent article, which has given new life and vigor to the Shylock-Fagin image of the Jew. To be understood properly, that revival must be seen in the perspective of the general reversion of writers in this decade to traditionalistic and intellectually regressive attitudes. Mr. Fiedler is also right, of course, in his view that the entry of the Jews into Western culture is coincident with its secularization. But to complete that historical proposition one must go on to state that to the degree that this secularization is weakened, debilitated by the reanimation of the Christian myth, precisely to that degree does the position of the Jew become precarious and in the long run intolerable. I agree with Sidney Hook and other analysts of anti-Semitism who see it as "integral to the Christian epic." To be sure, it is by no means integral to the rationalized religiosity (anti-theological and anti-mythic) of a Tolstoy; but it is integral to the kind of religiosity professed by writers like T. S. Eliot, whose chief stress is on the value of traditions and ecclesiastical institutions. (This can be said quite apart from the question whether Mr. Eliot is personally infected with anti-Semitic feelings: that is not the issue.)

Of course, nothing could be more presumptuous and more foolish, too, than for Jews to demand of the Gentiles that they desist from seeking to rediscover their Christian faith on the ground that it would eventually prove harmful to the Jews. What can be done, however, is to conduct a struggle against the new religiosity, along with those non-Jewish intellectuals who refuse to abandon the progressive and secular outlook. The struggle must be waged on wholly non-sectarian grounds, such as that the new religiosity is hostile to the best interests of the mind; that it tends to divide rather than unite humanity; and that it is historically vacuous and metaphysically permeated with a romantic nostalgia making it easy to evade the truly urgent problems of contemporary man.

Jews functioning within the Anglo-Amer-

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ican cultural milieu are destroying their own future when they try to accommodate themselves to the current literary enthusiasm for myth and tradition. For their future obviously lies with an even more radical secularizing and internationalizing of culture than has been known in the past. Both our intellectual dignity and emotional security depend on the promotion of the unity of mankind. Nor is it true that the secularizing and internationalizing of culture must necessarily involve us in that nihilistic rejection of national and religious traditions of which the old-time Marxists and rationalistic liberals have been rightly accused. It is entirely possible to maintain a fairly complete sense of the meaningfulness of myth and tradition, Christian or otherwise, while transcending them in a secular spirit.

Mr. Fiedler's notion of constructing "rival myths" of the Jew, myths of a positive nature that will compete with the negative myths, is appealing but scarcely feasible. Effective myths are the product of the infinitely slow processes of unconscious creativity and mass experience; they are not to be conjured into existence by improvisation and calculation. What Mr. Fiedler proposes is a local remedy to a universal disease. The remedy, as I see it, is to bring a halt to the de-secularization of culture so frivolously attempted by the reactionary intellectuals, and if possible to reverse the current. Here in America we are in an especially favorable position to proceed along these lines, since the American concept of nationality is built on political rather than on ethnic or religious foundations. The ethnocentric propaganda so typical of anti-Semitism in Europe, with its nationally homogeneous populations, is far less likely to succeed here. The American concept of nationality, political to the core, needs emphasis and elaboration; and in literature that can only mean strenuous opposition to all attempts to assimilate the American literary mind to the British literary mind, particularly the British literary mind of the past, with its aristocratic, xenophobic, and class background.

James Grossman: The questions asked by the editors of COMMENTARY seem to me to assume that everywhere in our literature, or at least in enough writers to be significant, a single persistent image of the Jew can be found. The assumption is reasonable, and once made is irrefutable, but still may not be worth making. We are committed to the proposition that events must have some meaning and some sufficient cause, and there must exist therefore a nightmare of fantasy about the Jews corresponding to and causing the nightmare of reality in the treatment of them through all of the Christian centuries to the present, the days after Hitler.

Once we posit the existence of the fantasy and decide that it must have left its traces in literature, it is of course possible to see them there, for we can always see in art what we look for if we only look imaginatively enough. Mr. Fiedler's recent article in COMMENTARY is a brilliant exercise in this kind of creative criticism, assembling as it does a number of apparently unrelated unpleasant Jews in books and displaying them as a single mythic beast, the castrator with a knife, an entity more horrible than the sum of its parts. But to bring into the light the hidden meaning of the old stories which the stories themselves dare not tell is not so much to discover the underlying myth as to invent it. Literally, the mythic castrator's knife is present in the story of Hugh of Lincoln and of Shylock only because a critic has just seen it there, and following him we can only now see as he does, until we are taught to see otherwise.

Myths cannot be refuted logically, for they only purport to be statements of what men have fancied, and they are particularly convincing when, as they so often do, they speak ill of men. There is for modern man an ontological proof of the existence of evil if not of good; whatever wickedness men have imagined of themselves must, we feel, be true. If there is any test of truth for a myth, it is in the universality of its application: the true myths, such as the great one about the fall of man, speak harshly of all men; the false of only a few. (Mr. Fiedler's article recognizes the truth of this in its suggestion that whatever truth there is in its apocalyptic vision of the man with the knife is a truth not about Jews but about all men.)

Whatever our duty may be in life to face reality (including the reality of what others think of Jews), in the practice of literature our duty of evasion seems clear. As writers we should never imagine some special evil of some special few, even in the form of

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stating that this is what others think of these few. If the mythic Jew exists in literature, he is not likely to be destroyed by direct confrontation. Any direct dealing with him should above all be avoided by the Jewish writer, who is almost certain to find in him new terrors and to breathe new life into him. If the mythic Jew of literature is ever to be destroyed, it can only be by his being displaced by other myths, which it seems to me will not, as has been suggested, be other myths about Jews, but other myths about mankind itself, for literature is after all not about some men but about all of us.

Martin Greenberg: The strong anti-Semitic tradition in English literature only serves to pose more nakedly the problem of my relation as a Jew to that literature, but does not itself constitute the problem. French and German Jews too were forced to consider their relation to the French and German literatures, although these are not nearly so anti-Semitic as the English. "Full participation and integration" in a literary tradition is not one of the Rights of Man; it is not only Shylock and Fagin who debar me from it, but my own consciousness of being a Jew.

I am conscious of a different provenance and, possibly, a different destiny. I am conscious of being *different*. The Gentile's relation to his literature is, generally, self-evident and unproblematic—*he* will not be invited by a magazine to consider the matter in a symposium. Whereas a Jew's consciousness of difference introduces an element of the equivocal into this as into many things. The equivocality, for me, is simple enough: I use a language, English, but I cannot call it mine; I live with a literature that I do not wholly possess. To use a language and not to own it, to live with a literature and not to possess it—this is only to say that I am a Jew.

Latterly, a good deal has been said by Jewish writers about "alienation" and particularly, in almost a boastful vein, about Jewish alienation; Mr. Fiedler himself refers to the "rich alienated art" of modern times. Well, we Jews are also "alienated" from the language we use and the literary tradition we are a part of, though at this point, where the matter passes from the abstract to a very touchy concrete, our complacency deserts us. Mr. Fiedler says that "if we want to call the culture in which we live our own, we will have to come to terms" with the mythic Bestial Jew. I detect here still a reluctance to accept that alienation which otherwise is described in tragic honorifics. The truth is, I believe, that we can look Shylock in the eye from now till Doomsday and still not be able to call English literature our own. This is something we simply must suffer; here, in any case, sufferance is still "the badge of all our tribe."

Nothing essential is lost by such an attitude, I think, and an essential candor is gained, the candor that enabled Kafka to write some of the finest prose of modern times. He, surely, ought to be our example. And his example moreover indicates to us how this particular alienation can be overcome; he of all people shows us the way out of our equivocal position. By his creative act the German Jews (ironically, on the verge of their extinction) came finally to possess their language. By a creative act English-speaking Jews may come finally to possess theirs.

Harry Levin: The mythical image of the Jew that your question presents is, to some extent, a myth of your own devising. The portrait has inevitably varied with the vicissitudes of English history, and with the marginal role that the Jews perforce have played in it until the past century. Under the theological odium of the Middle Ages, or during the centuries of total exclusion, stock characters and racial generalizations were bound to prevail. But the process of cultural enfranchisement that made a Jewish novelist Prime Minister, and entrusted a Jewish Shakespearean scholar with the editorship of the *Dictionary of National Biography,* made it possible to treat Jews as individuals in literature as in society. Modern writers have depicted all sorts and conditions of Jews: to assume that the least admirable depictions are the most typical is to fall into a trap which anti-Semitism has baited. With ampler justification, and with a much bloodier background of actual conflict, the Irish can accuse the English of libel. And if—without pushing the issue to its German extreme—we ask ourselves where the Jews have stood in French culture, we find both a higher degree of literary participation and a much more explicit anti-Semitic reaction.

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By listing together "such writers as" Chaucer and . . . Thomas Wolfe, you go somewhat out of your way to darken the picture. You arbitrarily omit the brighter touches of, say, George Eliot's or Browning's portraiture. Even Marlowe and Shakespeare, considered in the flickering light of their period, make out a surprising case for their Jewish villains; while later stage tradition, from Cumberland's *Jew* to Shaw's Mendoza, is on the whole friendly. Dickens's sympathy for the underdog would not allow him to rest content with the crude and early Fagin, but moved him—with the maturity of *Our Mutual Friend*—to create the counterbalancing figure of Riah. Such conflicting impressions, produced upon various Englishmen by a limited number of Jews, are less significant in the long run than the clear affinities that bind British culture to the Old Testament. This is attested not only by Milton and Blake, but indeed by Anglo-Saxon poetry, as well as by the Biblical intonations of English prose. The Puritans, in both old and New England, were constantly appealing to Hebrew precedent. When Matthew Arnold sought a name for that ethical outlook which he specially discerned in his compatriots and ours, he called it "Hebraism."

There is thus no reason why writers of Jewish ancestry should not feel at home within the broad perspectives of Anglo-American literary tradition. Times which revive the blood-myth and multiply the pogrom have, not unnaturally, made us apprehensive; but we shall not enhance our security by proscribing great authors as Nazi fellow-travellers. Caricature, though it exaggerates grossly, usually plays upon elements of truth. Who shall deny that Shylock or Bleistein bears any resemblance to any individual, living or dead? that Jewish behavior, under stress of circumstance, has tended toward legalistic patterns and materialistic values? It might be answered that instances stand out, not because Jews behave differently from others, but because they deviate so far from their traditional laws and spiritual allegiances. Gentiles have not denounced them more severely than their own prophets have, than Proust has done. Perhaps the worst condemnation of all is the slick venality or the self-pitying sentimentality that Jewish writers frequently expose and all too frequently exemplify. A semi-detached position offers us, along with certain disadvantages, some chance of viewing things objectively. To write off criticism as persecution is to trade that advantage for a mess of subjectivity.

Irving Howe: Your questions came while I happened to be reading some of Theodore Dreiser's papers. Dreiser has the reputation of having liberated American writing from gentility and of having fathered the American naturalistic social novel. In his last years he considered himself a radical and at the time of his death was a member of the Communist party. Yet he was also an anti-Semite; and though I knew of his anti-Semitism in general, I still found myself pained and shocked by his advice to a friend that only Americans, and not Jews, should be trusted in business. Why, one wonders, in all the tributes paid Dreiser, has this vicious, not exactly secret, streak of prejudice so seldom been mentioned? And why do not those present-day novelists who hail him as the liberator of American fiction consider how his anti-Semitism may affect the role they assign to him?

I think the occasional, unsystematic, even unmalicious anti-Semitism of some modern writers is far more reprehensible than anything to be found in Chaucer. There is no reason for surprise at Chaucer's vilification of the Jews; he was merely expressing a point of view universally accepted in the Christian world of his lifetime. But from Chaucer's time to our own there has been progress at least in what the intellectual minority considers the desired norm of civilized conduct —which is why a passing reference to "clever" or "grubbing" Jews by a modern writer is far more distressing than the Prioress's Tale.

We must distinguish between dramatic representations of Jews, even those intended as unfavorable generic representations, and direct statements of abuse. Shakespeare was probably not exempt from the common anti-Jewish attitudes of his time, but he has given his *Merchant of Venice* a dramatic tension impossible in the kind of anti-Semitic diatribe that can be found in Pound's *Cantos* or Céline's political books. Whether because Shylock "got the better of him" or because he really intended to create a credible human portrait, Shakespeare did not let Shylock be

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a mere Jewish villain. At least in part, we can identify ourselves with Shylock, and therefore can accept him.

Much the same is true of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta.* The first two acts of this play allow the Jew Barabas a certain subtle and impressive humanity, while the last three merely wrench him into a creature of total evil in order to fulfill the requirements of the Machiavellian play. But for me the play is redeemed by two lines that Marlowe puts into the mouth of Barabas after his fortune has been expropriated by Malta's Christian rulers: "What? bring you Scripture to confirm your wrongs?/Preach me not out of my possessions." It is just this touch of dramatic reality that the modern anti-Semite will not allow the Jew.

Still, whatever their historical origin, the gross caricatures of Jews in English literature make it impossible for one to be totally at ease with its tradition. But then why should one be totally at ease with it? Only in recent years, as a consequence of a certain academization of our literary life, has one heard talk about "absorbing" the tradition. I think the literary tradition is there for us to struggle with—so that we may both accept and reject. And there is much in it that we cannot accept with honor.

There is, however, nothing we should "do" or wish to "do" about Fagin or the Prioress's Tale or Eliot's landlord spawned in Antwerp. They are to be forever with us, a stab of pain, a reminder of evil. The important thing is not to let any notions about the inviolability of literature or the sacredness of art sway us from expressing our spontaneous passionate feelings about those contemporary writers who succumb, willingly or not, to anti-Semitism. We must beware of what Clement Greenberg has rightly called the culture-sickness of this age, the sickness which permits people to excuse or justify the most dreadful behavior and the most vicious ideas in the name of culture. It is not only necessary but *right* that we say exactly what we feel about the anti-Semitic remarks or passages of even the greatest modern writers. Indignation is often insufficient, but sometimes it is the only condition of dignity.

William Poster: Although my feelings about being a Jew and writing in the English or American language have undergone great alterations over the years, I cannot say that I have been impeded in my efforts by the various portraits of Jews that exist in English literature, except in so far as they have practical consequences in persecution and discrimination, neither of which I have ever experienced directly in a serious form. I began reading English literature intensively and writing poetry when I was about fourteen in the halcyon days before Hitler. Since I had no religious upbringing and no Jewish cultural training, I promptly identified myself with the authors I read and, by means of the emotional algebra of adolescence, counted myself out of the group they scorned or caricatured.

It was not long before I came down out of the clouds and realized that, like it or not, I was included. Now it is perfectly possible to keep oneself emotionally outside a group in which one is placed by a system of social classification and even to determine to resist such a classification. It is a response that I might have made, had I not found myself sharing nightmares, fears, rages, and sympathy with the Jewish group as a whole. In the decade after 1933, I wrote little because I could not see that writing made any sense at all under such conditions and I contemplated political activity of various kinds or going to Palestine—neither of which had any fundamental appeal to me. At the same time, I found myself engaged in trying to find answers to a whole host of related questions: Which traits were specifically Jewish? Which specifically English? American? Which actually composed my own character? Which English, American, and Jewish traits did I like or dislike? Which were valuable or deplorable in general moral terms?

The tentative answers are too complex to give here. I do think that the most important conclusion I came to was that I suffered more from not being a Jew, so to speak, because so large a part of the Jewish heritage never got to me and because so much of it is historically exhausted, than I did from the difficulties of being a Jew. I think a similar predicament affected large numbers of Americans because of the collapse or inadequacy of their respective traditions and I think my particular generation went or is going through a crisis because of

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it. Briefly, what happened was that anyone with a certain amount of vitality found that all the traditional wisdom, standards, methods of control, etc., available to him did not provide him with the minimal equipment necessary for life or a minimal *raison d'être*. One had to begin at the very beginnings or stagnate or rot.

The sense of instinctive historic discontinuity which America is acquiring as a consequence of this experience is bound to exercise, I think, a steadily disintegrative effect on anti-Semitism and Jewish exceptionalism. It is the most important factor in vital American art at the moment. It reduces the significance of the traditional image of the Jew, changes the cluster of attitudes about it, and makes it possible for the first time, I think, for Jew and non-Jew to share what is left of their respective traditions.

As to the literary portraits of Jews, considering the circumstances in which they were made and the fact that the harsher ones issued from harsh pens, I find that they have a certain amount of representational truth but are morally deficient because they came out of an inadequate and now bankrupt moral scheme. I am likewise not so much outraged by the traits the anti-Semite ascribes to Jews as by his evaluation of them, his refusal to face himself, and the brutality, hypocrisy, and stupidity of his politics.

I am also not very much impressed by Mr. Fiedler's values and those whom he considers the best and worst representatives of the Jewish people. I think there is considerable truth, for example, in the portraits of Shylock and Barabas, if one subtracts the element of caricature and remembers that Shakespeare and Marlowe were not fully equal to the task of understanding men with the special fortitude, magnificence, and historic depth of the Renaissance Jewish merchant. I think they were very great men operating under a great moral code. Shylock puts up an instinctively heroic defense of the most important principle of Western civilization—the sanctity of contracts.

By and large, defects and all, I regard the Jewish businessman as the best human type produced by the Jews and wince more at the portraits of refined, moribund, angelic Jews than I do at those of the scoundrels. Every group produces scoundrels in about an equal number; the Jews are a trifle too rich in martyrs and pure spirits for my particular taste.

Saul Bellow: To speak of "entering into an inheritance" as Leslie Fiedler does shows that something has happened to the idea of culture for which he of course is not to blame. There is a great and still increasing idolatry of culture, an object- and property-making tendency that has nothing to do with the creativity we summarize as "culture." The property brings with it a power struggle; there are legal heirs and, inevitably, false claimants. The Jews, as often when there is something to share, are disqualified. But what is it that disqualifies the Jew? Well, "culture" is aristocratic and the Jew has risen with democracy and "mongrelization." One of the aims of democracy is the aristocratization of everyone, and that, for the aristocrat of culture, means wider degradation, rather. Evil stimulant, heartless rationalist, Magian among Faustians, revolutionary agitating among people he can never understand, clever man of the industrial city, stupid financier blowing his cigar smoke over Venice, American of the days of decay—this is the way the Jew is characterized by those who have first call on tradition by right of birth and upbringing. And, as Mr. Fiedler brilliantly shows, tradition amply supports them. But is this characterization of us true? And in the great writing of the past is there something that rejects us such as we are now? Or is it the idol- and object-making heirs that reject us, assisted in their veneration by a dislike of us that lets them feel a closer union with their great past? But the answer is obvious: it is impossible for men to be rejected in great literature.

Great things always give pain; they can never be taken smoothly. Can we read *Lear* without the pains of parents and children? Or Job without the pain of the evil that man doesn't bring on himself? These pains are perhaps not the same for everyone and vary as people do in the development of their humanity. And for us the pain of Shylock may be greater than for others because we are Jews, but it has fundamentally the same meaning as these other pains. It doesn't drive us from nature, from human nature, from our own nature, any more than Lear's cry about woman drives women from theirs.

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It shocks, it punishes us and finds out unwanted alliances with our deepest impulses. But this is the primitive work of literature, which is not decent, modest, or remedially social.

We say to ourselves, "In Christian England of the 16th century a play about usury couldn't have been written in any other way. But what about modern Jew-despising writers?" For they are studiously and analytically historical. Many of them have been converted to Catholicism, Anglicanism, or to Social Credit and other things. A man isn't converted without taking thought, so they are thoughtful men and their anti-Semitism is that of people who weigh theological, political, and historical evidence. Their single great advantage over the past is the historical advantage; they know more history. This knowledge makes their dislike of the Jew more terrible if they are right, stupendously horrible if they are wrong. Modern reality, with the gases of Auschwitz still circulating in the air of Europe, gives us an excellent opportunity to judge whether they are right or wrong.

"Culture" as conceived by some of them, aristocratic, classical, the concretized, memorial culture has received an awful blow from modern reality. *"Il y a des mensonges qui sont inséparables de la culture et de la civilisation,"* writes Berdiaeff. A culture doesn't hold things to be true because they *are* true but because they are established things. Though the modern reality has made our nakedness greater it has also made these lies plainer. Should we continue to wrangle with the "heirs" for whom these lies are a very valuable part of the estate? History has given us the means to act more wisely.

Alfred Kazin: When God made the Jews, He ordained them to be bearers of witness to the human condition. This, as we know now, meant not that we should become like the others, but that the others should become like us. Unfortunately, He did not reconcile them to a minority's lot, as He has long since reconciled us. So, by a curious irony, some of the most gifted among them (as well as the least), spiritually the most isolated from their kind, hate us in proportion as they begin to resemble us.

This makes it very difficult for us, for damn it, their art is our morality. And except for this small matter, that they are always stupid about us, and insult us, and that some, like Pound and Céline, have even called for our deaths, we cannot let them go, nor can they let us go, for they imitate us, they are obviously fascinated by us. Notice how Pound slips into Yiddish even in *The Pisan Cantos,* how feelingly he impersonates a Jew. Think how Henry Adams' letters rail against "Jews" and "bankers" . . . of whom he considered himself one. Think how many protest they are even "Jews at heart." And think how, in our turn, *we* are fascinated with their resemblance to us. How else explain the great community our intellectuals feel with the most divided among them? After all, it is not to the "naive," the "simple" believers and humanists that we go, not to the truly Christian, like Bernanos and Mauriac. But precisely to the nasty ones, the clever modern ones – a Dostoevsky, a Henry James, a Henry Adams, an André Gide, a Santayana, a Cummings, a Céline, an Eliot, a Pound. How we love them, though they love us not! How we squirm and strain to get into Eliot's City of God – that state religion of forced faith, less hope, and no charity – though he has barred us from it in advance! Yet the community is there; they feel it and we feel it. In fact, if it were not for their *unfortunate* attitude about the Jews, some of us would be indistinguishable from them, if we are not that already.

What to do? We have told them repeatedly that *we* are not the evil they hate, but in fact suffer it just like them. But it is hard for them to understand. They are gifted, but superstitious. They have lost solidarity with that majority to which we never belonged, but they cannot bear to endure their loneliness, and so turn against us. What to do? Of course we try to protect our dignity as best we can, but we are peevish at times, we fall back into the pathetic myth of our superiority, and complain: *"We* understand you better than your own folk do! *We* set you up, you ungrateful wretches!" This is no good. What to do? The stupider ones among us would even exile us from them – as if we are not all exiles together! This is a joke on us. For we do understand them, too well. If we were to read only those who love us, even among ourselves, our intel-

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lectual diet would be thin indeed. It grows dull to live only with Jews. It is unnatural. This is not what He intended us for, to judge from our stubborn appetite for the whole living world.

So we go back to these writers, and sighing at their unreasonableness, quietly skip over a line here, close our eyes to a really disgusting passage there. It is of course a bitter kind of treason to ourselves; there is something horrible about it, if only you allow yourself to think on it. Here we are, we who read them and admire them *because* of our general kinship in the world, yet they refuse to recognize the bond, and, indeed, rail at us out from the very books we admire most. Oh, not the "classic" writers; even at their worst, they are comparatively innocent, for they lived before Hitler, and described Jews as *exotics*. But precisely the clever modern ones, the ones we imitate most, the ones who live among us in apprehension of their future. What insane self-humiliation this would be if we did not know why they are so! What irony that we forgive them *because* they unconsciously know what they do!

Or do we forgive them? Yes and no, but somehow "forgiveness" is not of the question, only endurance and understanding, even for so evil a genius as Céline, whose words helped to light the gas chambers. As well forgive ourselves for not loving our condition. As well shut ourselves off from the world again. No, no: there have been too many books banned and burned already. We have been too long on the *index expurgatorius* to make one of our own. If we wrote of Pound as he writes of us, who would pass judgment on anyone and give him a prize? No, we and the Eliots are all in this together, as he has virtually acknowledged, and we must show the others exactly why this is so. We must read them and endure—angrily so, of course; without toadying; not afraid to call ignorance and heartlessness by their right names, even if they do come from our literary dictators, those on whom we have modelled ourselves to sound as ungenerous as possible on every question.

Lionel Trilling: Your questions seem to imply that anti-Semitism is an *essential* characteristic of the literary tradition of England and America. But of course it is not—it is but an accidental characteristic. I have therefore never felt the necessity of defining my relation to the tradition. For me to do so would be not unlike a tailor's son undertaking in 19th-century England to examine the state of his feelings before writing novels because tailors were traditionally mocked in English literature. A literary tradition is after all remarkably unlike a club or an "exclusive" community in which one proposes oneself for membership.

This leaves, then, only the question of how I respond to the anti-Semitism of particular writers whose work, apart from their anti-Semitism, commands my admiration and respect. It is not a question I can answer categorically. The hostile representations of Jews by writers before the middle of the 19th century is for me the occasion of only an objective—as it were, an anthropological—interest. With writers of later date the situation is of course much more complex. I naturally meet hostile statements about Jews with hostility. But this doesn't necessarily destroy my relation with the writer who makes them. I like to like writers, but I am no longer of an age when I must like every writer who interests and profits me; nor do I feel that every writer I respond to must like me. I even get a kind of intellectual pleasure from maintaining an attitude of ambivalence toward writers who interest me. Anti-Semitism is, as Nietzsche said, a vulgarity; it is indeed remarkable how often notable minds of our day can support their quanta of vulgarity; but it would be foolish not to take from them what they have to give. There's no need to be in a passive relation to a writer, expecting him to be a guiding saint. D. H. Lawrence's anti-Semitism was not his sole absurd extravagance; one deals with him properly only if one thrashes his absurdities to make them yield the truth that lies in them.

I do not believe that all adverse statements about Jews necessarily are anti-Semitic in the usual meaning of the word. Thus I distinguish between, on the one hand, Eliot's symbolic use of the Jew in his poetry and, on the other hand, his remarks about Jews in his prose. Eliot's ideal of a homogeneous culture with a strong religious cast does not

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attract me—although it attracts many Jews, who, indeed, have put it into practice—but I do not think that it is necessarily a wicked idea, and if its development involves the adverse characterization of the cultural tendency of Jews, I do not think that this is in itself hateful, although I think it mistaken. After all, I was brought up to suppose that predications about Jews were permissible and extraordinarily interesting. In the intimate culture of my childhood, remark was always being made of the superiority of Jewish morality and intellect, of the Jewish freedom from alcoholism, insanity, prostitution, and crime. And as I grew a little older I became aware of the intense Jewish preoccupation with the refinements of cultural difference; Jews were then fascinated not only by what might follow from the large "Jews are . . .," but also by the subtleties which might be drawn from "German Jews are . . .," "Frankfurt Jews are . . .," "Polish Jews are . . .," "Lithuanian Jews are . . ."—perhaps no people has ever had a profounder belief in the effects which cultural circumstance has upon character. As a consequence of this training, when I began to encounter unpleasant predications about Jews, I thought they were untrue but not intellectually illegitimate. And I feel now that if the Jews consider themselves a cultural entity, which they are, they exist as a fact and an idea about which it is inevitable and legitimate that generalizations should be made.

This, of course, doesn't settle the matter for me. At the same time that I think that Jews may legitimately be the subject of generalization, I find that I dislike the generalizations—the flattering ones almost as much as the hostile ones. In this I share the paradoxical position of almost all Jewish communities of the Diaspora—and, I gather, of Israel too—which holds that Jews are different at the same time that they are just like everybody else. I feel sure that this contradiction represents the actual truth.

Yet if we stand for a cultural pluralism we must suppose that each of its components has enough reality to tempt discourse. And we must expect tension between the various elements of the pluralism—we can't, unless we befuddle ourselves with piety, expect a cultural loyalty to define itself except by a certain amount of aggressiveness to other cultures, not if you suppose that culture really goes deep, right down to the bottom of temperament. I don't like Thomas Wolfe, but I cannot hate or despise this man of the artisan class of North Carolina for his extravagant response to the Jews of New York. He represented a certain past and they represented a certain past, and something more than a bow was appropriate to the meeting of these two embodied ideas. It is needless to say that an acceptance of the implications of cultural pluralism does not suggest the abrogation of decency, the rules of evidence, and the ideals of common humanity and civil peace.

Karl Shapiro: When I consider my relationship to English literature, two questions rise in my mind. Am I a part of the literary tradition of England and of Europe or a foreign element working against that tradition? Does my American identity absolve me from my cultural allegiance to Europe, and, specifically, England?

Ten years ago I would have answered, "I am a product of European history and literature, as is every American writer." But today, with the consciousness that from hour to hour Europe is voiding itself of its residuum of Jews, I answer differently. "I am foreign matter to the European tradition of life and letters, and if I do not believe in a new and separate American civilization, I shall have no other cultural identity. Today I have even lost my desire to visit the physical Europe." Implicit in this new answer is my wish to dissociate myself from the scene of our horror, as well as my refusal to draw any closer to the Jewish community than I feel is consonant with my aims as poet, American, and Jew.

The scene of our horror, as Mr. Fiedler has ably shown, is reflected in the British literary imagination as well as in German history. And yet I have always been able to "understand" Chaucerian and even Shakespearean anti-Semitism as lingering concepts of the medieval mind. Naturally, I make no such concessions to the modern literary anti-Semite, however great an artist he happens to be. And I find literary anti-Semitism particularly revolting among intellectual Christian converts. Thus when Eliot perpetuates the myth of the Bestial Jew, without taking the pains elsewhere to mollify this image,

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he commits an outrage against his Jewish contemporaries and against the modern literary canon of which he is so significant a part. Still it would be careless to try to lump all literary anti-Semites together. Cummings and Henry Miller, for instance, lampoon the Jew cruelly but without the basic viciousness and the divine right of converts. Lawrence's anti-Semitism is again not Christian anti-Semitism but something far more profound, even though some of Lawrence's provincial prejudices stuck with him all his life. To call the author of *The Man Who Died* an anti-Semite is to miss the force of his shattering anti-Christianity.

I take it that most of the Jews who are contributing to this symposium, myself included, are of a sect to themselves. We are Jews by popular consent of the Judeo-Christian community and not by choice or ambition. We accept our Jewishness because to reject it would be a betrayal not of our electors but of ourselves. In the same way I felt when I was conscripted that to avoid military duty would have been a betrayal of my identity as an American. If this is negative Americanism then I can also call myself a negative Jew. But my election to America and to Israel gives me my total identity, *the kind of identity which has never been permitted to survive in all of Europe's history.*

Nothing will destroy the literary myth of the Bestial Jew except the creation of countermyths out of our modern exilic culture. I will not speculate on what such myths will be, but I feel it to be part of the work of American Jewish intellectuals to further this task. I see stirrings of a counter-mythos in the poetry of young Jews, and I pride myself on having a part in its inception. I believe with Mr. Fiedler that expurgation is dangerous and impossible, and I think Jewish propaganda of the professional kind may do more harm than good.

A frontal attack on the intellectual and artistic sensibilities of the best writers and thinkers of our time, with true works of art as our weapons, will surely pervade the consciousness of the anti-Jew who has not reached the pathological level.

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HOW WE USED TO LAUGH!

A Story

RUTH GLAZER

"DID I ever tell you," asked my mother-in-law, "about the first money that I ever earned? Now there's a story for a writer. You must know that when I was a child in Warsaw things were not what they are like here. There we had more cockroaches than money. We lived, my family, in a two-room apartment, except that one room we rented out to a shoemaker and his family and his helpers. In Warsaw, you know, many of the houses were arranged so that they surrounded a courtyard on three sides. And in this court was conducted every possible kind of business. All day long, from morning till night, the court was filled with people buying and selling, with children playing, with women doing their housework, with beggars, with idle old men, with street musicians. There were synagogues, *mikvahs,* houses of study, schools. In short everything a human being needed. You could live a lifetime and never need to leave your own courtyard. It was in such a place that we lived.

"My father, as you can imagine, had a fine position in this life. He was the *mikvah* concessionaire. For two kopecks he would give the men who came to the bath a box to store their clothes in, and in addition he was required to give them a towel and some soap. Sometimes the men would absent-mindedly forget to return the towels and would use them to wrap up their feet before sticking them into their boots. But fortunately we had my elder brother to take care of that sort of fellow. Generally he would notice it as they were leaving the bath. And if not, he would run about the market place looking for the culprit, and when he found him he would make him sit right down and take off the towels in front of everyone. Some of our finest citizens were caught at this sort of game.

"What with the losses it was a handsome living, as you can see. It was so handsome, in fact, that my mother also had to run a thriving business.

"But nevertheless my father was a householder and also a very pious and observant man. So on Friday night he was always ready to take home the poor travellers, the wandering collectors for worthy causes and whoever else might have come to the *shul* and was without a roof over his head for the Sabbath. As a matter of fact he was always the last to leave the *shul* so as to make sure that no one was left behind friendless. My mother should have become accustomed to this after a while, but she never failed to throw up her hands when she saw my father enter our room with three or four guests every Friday night. Not that we had so much to eat. But at least there was always the *chalah* that my mother had baked and this my father would distribute with a grand gesture, saying—'Come. Eat and help yourselves as if you were at home.' And as if this were not enough he would always make me and my brother run over to the *shul* with some food for the students who studied there and were supported by the charity of the community.

"WHEN I was about nine years old my father decided that I ought to begin learning a trade, and he apprenticed me to a woman in our courtyard who made shirts for the Russian army. There were many advantages to this position. First, of course, I was learning a trade. Secondly, it saved a meal at home since in addition to my wages of one gulden a week, which was worth about fifteen cents, I was given dinner every evening. And thirdly, the shop was warm. Of course, it was not really a shop. In the home, things were different from what they are here. There you lived and worked and

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cooked and brought up your children and conducted your business, all in the same room. What rooms they were, too. The buildings were so old that no one could tell how many years they had been standing. But the walls were so thick and the floors so stout that if there were a fire on the floor below the people on the floor above didn't have to bother to leave. Not like in this country. How many times have I had to run out of the house with a child under each arm because of a fire two stories away! It reminds me of my first week in America. We had an apartment on Stanton Street on the East Side and when it came to Friday I decided to give the kitchen floor a scrubbing. So naturally I took a pail of hot water and threw it on the floor. No sooner did I do it than I hear screams and cries from downstairs and all the neighbors came running to find out what was wrong with the greenhorn. These floors were like paper and all the water just poured through to the apartment downstairs. Not like in the home.

"The lady who ran this shirt factory lived in the same courtyard that we did and early every morning I went over to her place. I don't remember now whether she was supposed to give me breakfast or not. But I think not. At any rate I was very particular about food even then and I would just have some bread and milk before I left the house."

"What," asked my father-in-law, "you had milk in your house?"

"Oh," said my mother-in-law, "it was because of my mother's business. As I told you she ran quite a business. Every week from Monday through Friday there was a market in our courtyard. People sold chickens, bread, vegetables, milk, cheese, clothing, all kinds of things. And my mother used to make coffee and sell it to the market women. When it came to paying her at the end of the week they never had any money, of course, so they would give her a chicken's gizzard or a neck and a few chicken's feet and in this way we always had a soup on a Friday night.

"Now this woman who made the shirts had another girl working there besides me. And at the same time her husband, who was a carpenter, also did his work in the same room with the help of two apprentices. The result was that the air and the floor and the tables were always full of wood shavings. Since I was just learning I was set to work finishing buttonholes, and for this I was given a little three-cornered stool on which I would sit almost bent in two and covered with the shavings. The older girl, whom I could not have envied more if she had sat on a satin divan, had an upturned straw basket, and the mistress of the house sat on a real chair and ran the sewing machine. Sometimes a visitor who came into the room would glance into my corner and would jump in alarm. 'What's that stirring among the wood shavings,' he would say. 'Do you have a cat here?' 'Oh no,' and they would laugh, 'it's just a little girl who works here finishing buttonholes. Taubele,' they would say, 'push away the shavings and show yourself to the gentleman.'

"In our house it was bitterly cold in the winter, but here with all these shavings to burn, the stove was kept going all day. They even cooked dinner over the same open fire. You must know that in addition to finishing buttonholes, I was also required to wash the dishes and pots. How I hated that. We had only cold water and those greasy pots would be covered with soot from the open fire. But still it was a gulden a week.

"Now, of course, I was not given my wages punctually every week. But finally after two months they gave it to me in a lump sum. Imagine, eight *gulden* all at once in my pocket. I ran home to my mother and announced that I was going down to Perile to buy a pair of patent-leather shoes with a strap across. My mother remonstrated with me. 'Wait,' she said. 'You know what kind of shoes Perile sells. Paper. For the *goyim.* Wait until after *Shabbes;* your father will put a ruble to the eight gulden and you'll be able to buy yourself a good pair of shoes.' But you know how a child is. Stubborn as an ox. Talk to it and talk to the wall. So finally my mother said, 'Well, it's your money. You worked for it. You know what I think, but if you want to buy a pair of shoes from Perile, go buy them.'

"So I ran downstairs and Perile fitted me with a pair of tight stylish patent-leather slippers with a strap across that buttoned down on one side. The next morning I put on my new shoes and went down to the courtyard where my friends were skipping rope. And that night when I returned home

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my mother could count every one of my toes sticking out of my new shoes.

"So I worked there for quite a while. Maybe another year."

"Tell me," said my father-in-law, "where were the beds? Were they also in this room?"

"Of course," said my mother-in-law. "During the day they were covered over and we would lay out the finished shirts on them. You know what kind of shirts they were? Cossack shirts with a long strip of embroidery and with a high buttoned collar. And then at night they would be rolled up and the beds would be made to be slept in.

"WHEN I was about ten or eleven my father said to me, 'Taubele, this finishing of buttonholes is getting you no place. What are you learning sitting there in the sawdust and washing greasy pots? We'll have to apprentice you to a good shirtmaker so that you can really learn a trade and then we'll buy you a machine and you'll be able to work for yourself.' So he inquired around among the neighbors in the courtyard and found a woman who made expensive custom shirts who was willing to take me on as an apprentice. What a courtyard that was. We had at least three *shuls* there—one for the poor uneducated class, another for the business men, and another for the Hasidim—not to mention the *beth midrash* and as many businesses as there were rooms. Naturally since I was just learning I didn't get paid and neither did I get to work on any shirts. Instead she would give me scraps of material and I would make buttonholes and sew fine seams until I saw stars. But she was never able to make up her mind to trust me with a shirt. Then one day somebody told me that in the next courtyard there was a factory which made paper leaves for artificial flowers. 'What are you working here for nothing for?' said the girl from the factory. 'Come over to the next courtyard and work in the factory. They give you half a ruble a week.' I couldn't believe my ears. But she didn't have to say another word. I took my shawl and ran to the next courtyard. And sure enough they were paying half a ruble a week and they hired me. And at the end of the week I saw that everyone took his coat and began to leave and nobody said anything about money.

" 'Listen,' I said to the girl next to me, 'what about pay? Don't they pay you?' 'Pay,' she said, 'You expect to get pay? You've only been working here for a week. Wait till you've worked for a while. Then they'll give you some pay.' "

"Well," said my father-in-law, "you were just a young girl. But what about the married men? Could they carry on this way with the married men?"

"Oh, the married men," said my mother-in-law. "To the married men, of course, they had to give something on account. Ah, that account system. Every day at lunch-time an old woman used to come around selling seeded rolls. Great big rolls. Delicious. I remember them to this day. Every day I used to buy two rolls and wash them down with a glass of water. I've never in my life eaten anything so good."

"What, you had money?" inquired my father-in-law.

"What money, who money?" said my mother-in-law. "They marked it down in the account to be deducted when they gave out the pay. But I worked myself up in that place, I made four gulden a week, then five. At the end I think I was making two rubles. But we had a foreman there. . . . He never said a word. But he would sit with a book. And you know we were just young girls. We liked to laugh, to talk, to sing. And for every smile he would mark down in the book —five kopecks, for a remark another five kopecks, and sometimes even though it cost us half our pay we couldn't restrain ourselves and would just roll under the tables with laughter.

"What a family that was," said my mother-in-law. "Finally when they went out of business they owed me twelve rubles. But how we used to laugh! . . . You know," she said, "I saw his son last week. He has a jewelry store on Burnside Avenue."

"Whose son," asked my father-in-law, "the foreman's?"

"No," said my mother-in-law, "the boss's."

"How do you know?"

"How do I know. First of all the name is the same and second of all I never saw two people look so much alike. Like one face. So I went in and asked him if his father had once run a flower factory on such and such a street in Warsaw. Of course he denied it. Probably because of the bankruptcy. But he couldn't fool me. Like one face, I tell you."

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE SERVICE OF THE TEMPLE

Yom Kippur in Stillwater Falls

GRACE GOLDIN

REBA GROSSINGER was one of the wealthiest women in Stillwater Falls. It was at her home that I met the new rabbi. She was a high-stepping, good-looking redhead, and he was a nice guy and a *nebbich*. He had just landed the job at Stillwater Falls—accepted the call, as they say—and Reba gave a cocktail party to celebrate his arrival. Her main object, so far as I could see, was to get Rabbi Saberski drunk. The rabbi could drink as well as a real man, and knew how to stop with three, but the three at Grossingers' were deliberately loaded—double, triple what they should have been. In half an hour Rabbi Saberski excused himself, dodged outdoors, and rendered unto Reba's frozen flowerbeds what had been Reba's. The next morning his hostess, with rings under her eyes and a frantic headache, ran into Rabbi Saberski; he was light of foot, calm of glance. From that moment, Reba saw her rabbi as a man not quite of this world; and she made him her mentor.

"I'm not smart like you, Rabbi," she would say earnestly, "but I do believe in certain things. . . ."

What Reba believed in was mailed to her in mimeographed form by the National Zionist Office. She was women's district chairman of our mid-West region. Night after night she sat up late in bed learning the facts National had set before her. She took her degree in Judaica by correspondence course. Day after day she travelled to her communities in her fancy hat—pleading with them to inform themselves. "If I can learn all this, *anybody* can!" she encouraged them after luncheon or high tea. "It's all written down here—all you have to do if you have questions is write National—they'll be more than glad to send you information." She talked well and intensely; she was an asset to National and an inspiration to her regional flock.

One day Reba came to Rabbi Saberski's study and asked him to read to her out of Midrash.

"*What* Midrash?"

"Oh, stories."

Delighted to find that the rivers of Zionism had led her to this sea, he recounted tale upon tale with a warming enthusiasm. But after three quarters of an hour Reba stopped him.

"Thanks a lot, Rabbi," she said, "but won't do."

Saberski tumbled down seventeen hundred years. "What won't do?"

"I need a story for a donor's luncheon on Wednesday in Kansas City," Reba replied, "but I'm afraid none of your stories quite fit."

Some months later I got a letter from Reba Grossinger, when the partition of Palestine and the establishment of the Jewish state seemed certain. Reba was lost. The end was

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Few contributions to our "American Scene" department have evoked a greater response from our readers than GRACE GOLDIN'S memoir "I Remember Tulsa" in the March 1948 COMMENTARY. Now, Mrs. Goldin takes us to "Stillwater Falls"—and points far beyond. Mrs. Goldin was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and was graduated from Barnard College. She has written for *Jewish Frontier, Reconstructionist,* and other magazines. (The poem by Karl Shapiro quoted by permission on pages 381 and 382, copyright 1948, The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.)

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achieved. What next? "Anyway," she wrote, "I'm not sorry I took up with the Zionists. Zionism made me what I am today. If it weren't for National I wouldn't know anything about Judaism—not a single thing!"

WHAT Reba Grossinger drew from Zionism, Reuben Saberski found in Talmud, in the Siddur, in the Temple at Jerusalem and other such archaeological oddities. I can remember him standing all by himself once in a field, at some picnic or other—long of torso, short of leg, hands clenched behind him and gaze fixed on the ground.

When I spoke to him, he said he was reviewing Talmud; his old *rebbe* used to admonish him: "Learn a lot of Talmud, learn it by heart. Then when you lie in your grave waiting for the Resurrection, you needn't lie idle: you can review a page of Talmud every now and then and keep your mind occupied." And Rabbi Saberski turned on me his mournful eyes. Nothing in his experience, nothing in Stillwater Falls, justified the expression of his eyes. I was reminded of it lately by a photograph in the Schocken volume, *Polish Jews,* captioned "Petitioner." Shave off the beard and sidecurls, leave a little bushy moustache, and there you have the very look of Reuben Saberski, whose mother brought him to this country from Poland when he was ten months old.

From the first he was destined for the rabbinate, because his mother kept a strict Jewish home. As it is said, "In the old country if you walked four ells in the morning before washing your hands you were a heretic. In America if you can make a *motzi*—if you can say the blessing before food—you're a rabbi." Saberski became a rabbi at Schechter's Seminary, and was as happy in his post as most men are. "They pay me seven thousand dollars a year," he once remarked to me, "and buy me body and soul."

I saw Saberski really gay just once. We were walking home from *shul* on a Friday night—the rabbi, my husband, and I—when talk veered to the number of modes in which the Kaddish can be sung. My husband and Reuben Saberski began to swap tunes, chanting heartily, challenging each other to variations. There was the ordinary Kaddish for rounding out a section of the synagogue service; there was the everyday mourner's Kaddish; there was the great Kaddish for Yom Kippur, and a festal Kaddish for holidays; there was the Spanish-Portuguese Kaddish for Tisha b'Ab, and the ordinary Spanish-Portuguese Kaddish; there were a couple of Kaddishes from Germany; there was a Kaddish to be read upon completing a scholarly work. All in all, between them, they cited fourteen tunes for the Kaddish and vowed there were many more.

As Saberski rollicked with his Kaddish down the dark streets of Stillwater Falls, I was reminded of the year we got our garden. The garden came with the house, and I had an awful time distinguishing weeds from flowers. One afternoon I relentlessly tore out by the roots every Canterbury Bell I owned, convinced by the look of the buds that they must be weeds. One uprooted Canterbury Bell caught on the back fence and there, waterless, hanging head down for two whole weeks, it bloomed. It was an intense blue. Reuben Saberski, blossoming in his Kaddish, was a lot like that.

Yet our rabbi's Friday evening sermons were bad—deliberately bad, I often thought. He despised the late Friday service. "That's not a service, it's a smörgasbord!" he'd snort. His Sabbath sermons, based on the Biblical portion of the week, were welcomed with delight—by the old men.

HIS Yom Kippur service I thought wonderful, though nearly everybody in Stillwater Falls disagreed with me on this point.

Then he laid his main stress on the Avodah, that painstaking recitation of the acts and moves of the High Priest in Jerusalem on the Day of Atonement. But on all sides you heard: "Why doesn't he *interpret* the rituals for our time?" "It's the *spirit* of atonement we need." "It's not what goes into the mouth but what comes out of it that counts" (that old emetic principle). Yes, the Stillwater Falls congregation did not noticeably flock to their rabbi for his annual High Priest sermon.

But for me it was an opening of the door.

I always had difficulty getting into rapport with Yom Kippur. Perhaps it was because we had a *shul* in our own home when I was growing up, a *shul* that seated only thirty worshipers. Those who came for purely social reasons circulated in the living room, the hall, and the den. I am sorry to say that one of my earliest recollections of the Great Fast

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is of myself and a cousin, about nine or ten years old, weaving about in the living room among our adult relatives with a sugar bowl. I cannot now remember why we thought dry sugar a particularly seductive food, but we would gulp heaping teaspoonfuls of it under the eyes of our relations, exclaiming: "Delicious! Don't you wish *you* had some?" Later on, when I myself was fasting and supposedly pious, I brought to *shul* a copy of the Psalms in English to stimulate a penitential mood: I was old enough to enjoy the King James David but found I could not respond to the marvelous supplications in the Yom Kippur prayer book—particularly when I discovered with glee that one of Israel Zangwill's translations had been tricked out in the meters of Swinburne:

The worlds He upholds in their flying,
His feet on the footstool of earth. . . .

Not until I heard the Avodah service under Rabbi Saberski's auspices—that very dry, meticulous enumeration of the offices and bodily functions of the High Priest—did I begin by indirection to find direction out, and comprehend what Yom Kippur was invented for.

When the cantor—oddly enough named Kantor—approached the Ark for a confession of personal inadequacy at the outset of the Avodah, he could scarcely be heard by those at the back of the hall.

"Look on me," he whispered in a very sweet tenor, "look on me, bankrupt of merit, trembling, in terror of my life before You who live within the praises of Israel—God of Abraham, God of Isaac and Jacob, Lord, Lord; merciful and gracious God! O make safe the roads by which I walk, and come, and stand before You, seeking mercy for myself and for those who sent me! Do not hold them guilty for my sins, charge them not with my wickednesses, for I am a sinning man. Do not cause them to suffer for my transgression, and do not let them be ashamed of me, nor make me ashamed of them."

Presently he broke out into full voice with joyful assurances: "I will hope in the Lord, I will come before Him, I will implore Him to loosen my tongue! For the heart's readiness is man's, but from the Lord the tongue's responses."

Then, after we had been softened, as it were, Rabbi Saberski came forward and began to read out in English the service of the High Priest.

He started by taking his listeners to Jerusalem, and so vividly, so passionately did he describe the scene, that in me at least he awoke a sense of historical continuity, a true conviction of likenesses between people then and people now, or (as the rabbi would have put it) between Jews then and Jews now. When he spoke of old men tottering up to the Temple Mount, men too old for the climb yet reveling in their difficulties, I thought about Old Man Rabinowitz, who before he came to our town used to travel once a week from the Bronx to Brooklyn, to the only kosher delicatessen in New York City that he would trust.

Old Man Rabinowitz moved to Stillwater Falls upon the death of his wife, arriving on his daughter's doorstep there with a *chalah* under one arm and the roots of a pickled tongue under the other. He kissed the *mezuza* and his daughter, he pushed past his son-in-law straight back to the bedroom; only when he had made sure there were twin beds did he come out to the living room and sit down (see Lev. 15:19 ff.).

In Stillwater Falls, Old Man Rabinowitz pursued two tasks. He expounded the Laws of Israel in foreign-accented English, and he acquainted his three grandsons, whose father was a *Kohen*, with sufficient Judaism to qualify them to *duchan* on holidays—to bless the congregation with the ancient priestly blessing. Year after year Nathaniel, Simon, and Edgar Cohen stood before the congregation in their socks, arms outstretched, faces covered, until one by one they disqualified themselves for the high office to which their grandfather had elevated them: Nathaniel intermarried, Edgar got into mischief, and Simon just didn't care.

Thereafter Old Man Rabinowitz devoted himself wholly to the Laws of Israel. He would have been a saint in days when it was the job of saints to say of the clean: it is clean; and of the unclean: it is unclean. For me, he shed a new light upon hard-boiled eggs: in a kosher pot, three must be boiled for two that are eaten, the third egg absorbing the inadvertent impurity of the other two; in a non-kosher pot, all eggs acquire impurity from the pot. Oh the white

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of an egg, outwardly spotless, shot through nonetheless with ritual impurity! It made me shudder, sometimes, to think how kosher were the inward parts of Old Man Rabinowitz.

On Yom Kippur, said Rabbi Saberski, the Temple Mount was jammed, and the rest of Jerusalem must have looked like a college town during homecoming game. A vast mob squeezed into the three concentric courts of the Temple, and yet, as my English translation assures me, "there was always room for a Jew to be prostrated."

The Rabbi led us briefly through the outer court of the Temple, the Court of Gentiles, and up a flight of steps through the first inner wall, past which no one but a Jew might venture except upon pain of death, and not even Jews in a state of ritual impurity. Rabbi Saberski did not question our eligibility. Even pots, he would say, whatever their past, if they have lain neglected three years may be used again for kosher foods; how much more so we, whose ritual impurity had lain neglected two thousand years! So he ushered us in among the Israelites in the Women's Court, where Jews of both sexes congregated —all, in fact, who had no priestly or Levitical blood. But the crowd on Yom Kippur, overflowing, pressed up a second flight of steps to the Court of the Men, the Priestly Court, which they entered through a gate with double gold doors donated to the Temple by one Alexander of Alexandria. And as we were pushed through those doors, I thought again how all ages are the same: what was Alexander of Alexandria but the Julius Plost of his generation?

Julius Plost was president of our *shul* in Stillwater Falls, a wrinkled and rubicund little Jew. I remember how he carried on at the first Rosh Hashanah service Rabbi Saberski conducted. Some quirk of the rabbi's Seminary training had imposed upon us, in English, that hymn beginning, "All the world shall come to praise Thee"—another Zangwill translation. Around the second verse I became aware of a little figure marching up and down the aisles—it was Mr. Plost, hissing at anybody who would hear: "Salvation Army! Salvation Army!"

When we needed a Hebrew school, Julius Plost donated one. Yes, singlehanded. When the school had to have teachers, Julius Plost went to New York and picked them out. When there was an "affair" at *shul,* Julius Plost phoned the guests, arranged the chairs, hired the waiters. When the waiters failed to show up, Julius Plost served the tables, an apron around his middle, a happy smile on his round face.

And if the handyman decamped before the party was over, Julius Plost swept the floor. That *shul* was his baby. He is not a young man, and some day his presidency will kill him. On the other hand, he had been president for twelve years already when we left Stillwater Falls, he is president today, and if you took the job away it would kill him too.

Then Julius Plost is the soul of the fund-raising dinners. Every yeshiva in America blesses his name. Jewish defense organizations batten upon him. The tubercular patients of Denver, the spastic children of Des Moines, recognize him on sight from his portrait in their dining halls. He once won a four-door Ford sedan at a Community Fund raffle: he had bought up a quarter of the tickets. He provides relief for Jewish refugees in Shanghai and for respectable aged indigent females in Stillwater Falls. He is a Big Brother, a Seaman's Friend. He contributes to American Pioneer Trails and India Famine Relief, the Society for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis and the Society for the Prevention of Asphyxial Death, thus confirming what is said: "What a people is this people Israel! They are asked to give to the golden calf and they give willingly. They are asked to give to God's tabernacle and they give willingly also!"

But to return to that earlier Plost, Alexander of Alexandria, and his two gold doors. Just beyond Alexander's gate, in the Priestly Court (said Saberski), rose three stone steps where the priests stood to *duchan* —in their socks? But no, the rabbi deals with this question too, and informs us that they went barefoot, keeping a physician on hand to cure an intestinal disorder that arose precisely from this walking barefoot on cold stone.

Within the Priestly Court, the principal object to meet our eyes is one most barbarous —a huge stone altar, really a slaughter table running with blood; and nearby an abattoir, that is a slaughter-house, with the carcasses

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of the day's sacrifices hanging head down. What a mixture this is of a place of solemn worship and a butcher shop! Over at one side the priests expertly flay and disjoint dead bullocks and sheep. I am accustomed to having my butcher shop hedged round with religion, but that our worship once partook of the butcher shop is a stranger fact.

Rabbi Saberski never minimized reality, but he did not keep us long at the foot of that altar, so eager was he to point out what rose beyond—our Temple itself. He described the walls, alternate layers of granite and dark marble, seeming from afar like waves of the sea. He furnishes details: a special roof construction to drain off rainwater and drive away ravens; a row of little windows, high up; twelve stone steps mounting to the main doorway, which was curtained with a linen curtain, blue, white, scarlet, purple. And in a second story, equal in size to the first, the Jews stored weapons of all kinds. Here I thought of Alberto and his German guns.

Alberto was professor of printmaking at the University of Stillwater Falls—at thirty-four, one of the world's great printmakers. Baron de Hirsch brought his parents to the Argentine, Perón had already sent Alberto forth from there. We often heard him talk politics, or art. And he would tell us eagerly how the horses make love in his country. They do not settle down together at once, in a dull way; no, they run together for months across the pampas, run and run with their magnificent bodies, and in nearly every print of Alberto's you'll find a horse somewhere. "The beautiful horses of my country!" Alberto exclaimed, kissing his fingertips. He did not often introduce a Jewish theme into his work, and we were surprised when he invited us over to hear records of the beautiful, the fantastic voice of Cantor Rosenblatt. Alberto's wife went right along with Cantor Rosenblatt when he sang flamenco (known to the trade as *hazanut*). "It make the hair on my arm stand up!" Elena shivers. Elena was a Catholic girl, but Alberto says there was not in Argentina any problem about intermarriage, like what he has heard about in our country.

That night, Alberto told us he had bought two guns for Palestine—German guns, seized by some American soldier in the war, that had the word *Jude* scratched in the wood of their butts. "When I see this," he affirmed, "something inside me burst. What you do with these gun? Either you burn him up, or you send him over there to shoot back. They have to shoot back. That is the only thing for such gun!"

Alberto's mother was horrified that her son learned to shoot. A Jew doesn't do such things. So far as I could find out, Alberto's Jewish learning ended when his *cheder* teacher threw a prayer book at him and broke his nose; but he shoots squirrels to this day in Stillwater Falls when the hunting season comes around. "You will see," he used to say. "If they come for me, I will be ready for them. They will have to kill me, baby. Is not so easy!"

Alberto stood one hundred per cent behind the Jewish army in Palestine. "For an eye, an eye!" he cried. "We have to win these battle for the country. After that, I don't care what will happen."

"What do you mean, you don't care what will happen!" my husband demanded. "How do you disclaim responsibility like that?"

"The world have to know that the Jews can fight," Alberto responded firmly. "After that, is not our business."

"*Our!*" my husband mocked. "Do you want to make me a *goy* like you?"

"Oh baby, Professore," Alberto flashed back. "What a *goy* you would be!"

But Alberto wasn't a *goy*. He was a Jew—the splinter of a Jew. And sitting there in *shul* I thought how Judaism, the living phenomenon, which for centuries rolled along as a unit, had—still very much alive—exploded in our midst here in America, leaving one Jew with a Jewish openheartedness, one with meticulous piety, one with stubborn militancy, one with a need for study, and one with the taste for gefilte fish. I thought of Selma, whose father got her into a very exclusive California school. The school's official quota was one Jew for every hundred girls; that year there were only twenty-seven students in the whole place. "Officially," Selma remarked to me, "only my left leg went to finishing school." There are Jews whose left leg alone is genuinely Jewish. I remembered the story of a fellow with no more than a Jewish toenail, who said to his valet the day before Yom Kippur, "Tilson, tomorrow is a Jewish holiday. Go buy some matzos."

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I thought of Stillwater Falls' many fragmentary Jews. For instance, Iz Goldberger. Iz was an oil man, who wore a gold *mezuza* on his watch chain. But when our rabbi called on him for his contribution to the United Jewish Appeal, Iz handed over a check for $500. "Iz!" protested Saberski. "The family of Julius Plost is giving $30,000 this year!" "Maybe he can afford it," snapped Iz Goldberger.

Pious he isn't. I remember him complaining to Rabbi Saberski one Friday night that somebody had swiped his cigar; he left it in the dirt of one of the potted palms in the vestry, before services, and when he came back the cigar was gone. "Rabbi!" he remonstrated. "In a *shul*! On Friday night!"

"I never thought Iz Goldberger was human," Saberski once told us, "until the day of his son's Bar Mitzva. The kid said his *maftir* all right and won his fountain pens, and his father sat there facing me in the second row of the congregation, crying his heart out. When the service was over Iz Goldberger came up to me, and do you know what he said? 'I want him to be a good Jew, Rabbi!'"

I thought of Emmy Adler, who fascinated me because I had never before met a completely pious Jew almost totally divorced from the orthodox forms of Judaism. The God of Israel I had always thought a bit more approachable through Hebrew, or, by long habit, Yiddish; Emmy Adler never found any difficulty making him understand her English. She talked to him long and intimately over her Sabbath candles. For her, I am convinced, prayer and charity will sufficiently avert the evil decree; she was one of the few people I ever knew who could affirm wholeheartedly, without any mental reservation, after the death of six million Jews: "Young I was, and now am old, yet never saw the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging for bread." For her benefit the entire *Tsenah Renah*—the women's meditations—ought to be translated out of Yiddish into English; yet she expressed this wealth of devotion through just two symbols: her candles, and her Jewish National Fund box.

What his harp was for David, that blue charity box was for Emmy Adler. To every Hadassah meeting she came with a box stuffed full of bills; to every Pioneer Women meeting (in the mid-West many women belong to both) with a second box equally full: thirty, forty dollars month after month in each. A dollar for Mrs. Brodsky's baby, two dollars for her niece's operation, three dollars because the Temple burned on Tisha b'Ab; she solemnized nativities and deaths with equal lucre. I suppose Plost gave infinitely more; Emmy could not singlehanded have caused the name of Stillwater Falls to be added to that great honor roll in Hadassah Hospital.

But I always felt that they knew Miss Adler in Jerusalem. And when Rabbi Saberski escorted us into the Temple that Yom Kippur, and against the ceiling of its small vestibule pointed out a gold vine where the devout hung precious gifts, I pictured Emmy Adler running forward with her offering.

IN THAT vestibule, the Rabbi taught us, stale shewbread was kept and knives for the slaughtering. With a flourish, he stepped beyond; opened for us the great hall of the Sanctuary, and showed us its walls carved in more than Oriental splendor with cherubim, doves, lilies, palms; located the altar of incense, topped by beaten gold, the twice-five tables for fresh shewbread, the famous seven-branched candlestick that ended its career in effigy on Titus' Arch. Over all the scene Reuben Saberski cast his heart's readiness—as our old colored cook used to put it, "he was lying in his luxuries."

But an immoderate indulgence in things of this world is not for a good Jew. Rabbi Saberski broke off here in his description, fingering no more the gold of the Temple furnishings and removing his nose from the vents of the incense-burner, to lead us out once more to the Priestly Court, where the High Priest himself was just emerging from behind an outstretched sheet after his third complete immersion that day.

The High Priest had painstakingly been made ready for this moment. For seven days he had dwelt in the Temple precincts under close supervision, another priest standing by in case ritual accident should befall the chief performer. The night before Yom Kippur they would not let the High Priest sleep, lest he defile himself; they kept him awake by reading out enlivening texts—Job or Chronicles! They adjured him not to forget his part, to alter nothing of what he had been taught; and they wept to think he might

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forget, and he wept to think they thought such thoughts of him.

Now he comes forth: he has completed his morning ceremonies; he is arrayed in festal white from Pelusium, worth eighteen *manims*. As he appears a shudder goes through the people to think how pure, how terribly pure within and without, is their High Priest.

It was disappointing to be told that on this day the High Priest would not flaunt his breastplate. There was a full-color reproduction of that breastplate in our big Webster at home, with tribal names written out in Hebrew on each stone; I remember how impressed I was as a child that Hebrew had penetrated even the English dictionary. Since the breastplate was a cumbersome thing, some assistant carried it along before the High Priest when it was required; meanwhile, on this day, the High Priest moved unencumbered in his whites toward the bullock, which was to receive his sins. "He lays his hands upon its head"—Rabbi Saberski read directly from the Avodah service—"his sins he confesses, he does not conceal them within his own breast." Thus he speaks:

"I pray Thee, Lord:
I have sinned
And I have done wickedly;
I have transgressed before Thee, I and my house.
I pray Thee, by Thy name.
Forgive the sins,
The wickednesses
And the transgressions
That I sinned and I was wicked in
And that I transgressed before Thee, I and my house.
As it is written in the Torah of Moses Thy servant:
"'On this day shall atonement be made for you, to purify you of all your sins before the Lord.'"

He calls upon the Lord by His true name—syllables that occur these days in all the history books but in that time were never pronounced save by the High Priest, thrice, on the Day of Atonement. Hearing the Name spoken out loud everybody falls down to the ground in terror; the congregation with one accord falls *korim* and cries, "Blessed be His glorious Name, whose Kingdom endures for ever and ever!" The Priest prolongs the Name of the Lord till they have responded and ended; then he says to them: "You shall be clean."

Next, our Rabbi tells us, the High Priest turns around to the waiting twin white goats. He casts lots to determine which shall serve as scapegoat and atone for Israel's unknown sin, and which shall be slaughtered then and there to atone for the sins of the Temple personnel. On the head of the destined scapegoat, he ties a red and shining thread; then he comes to his bullock again, lays his hands on its head, and confesses upon it the sins of the entire priesthood.

Afterwards, each movement prescribed as in a dance, he kills his bullock. Rabbi Saberski urged us to believe that the shedding of blood in this context must seem to us a fitting principle, binding the holy thing more firmly to the earth, not letting it shrivel up amid pews, and hymns, and a dead decorum. Nowadays, he would say, we find on the one hand so much bloodletting, on the other so much good will, high sentiment, and interfaith work: maybe it was wise of our ancestors to join realism with high fervency. The High Priest hands a bowl of blood to his acolyte, who keeps it stirring lest it congeal.

Now the High Priest seizes a light censer of *parwah* gold, very long-handled, heaping three *kabs* of burning coals therein; he fills his two hands full of the finest incense and pours that into a large gold spoon; carrying the censer in his right hand, the spoon in his left, he approaches a second linen curtain—blue, white, scarlet, purple—separating him and all the world from the Holy of Holies. He pushes the curtain aside and enters.

In old days, the Rabbi said, before the Babylonian Captivity, the original Ark of Moses lodged in the Holy of Holies. Nothing remains now but a little upraised ledge of rock, upon which the High Priest sets his censer down. He throws the incense over the live coals, making a billowy black smoke in that dim place. Then he darts out through the curtain and snatches the bowl containing the bullock's blood; returning within, he sprinkles the Holy of Holies, once on high and seven times toward the ground—"not as though he were aiming," the Mishnah recalls, "but as though he were wielding a whip." He counts, as Jews have counted every Yom Kippur since: "One. One and

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one. One and two. One and three. One and four. One and five. One and six. One and seven."

Then he kills his goat and purifies the curtain inside and out with goat's blood; but in all he hurries, scarcely lingering within the Holy of Holies to mutter a brief prayer, lest Israel be terrified by his long absence. "He came in in terror of his life, he goes out in terror of his life." When he is done sprinkling and purifying every part, he lays his hands upon the scapegoat to confess the sins and arrogance of Israel:

I pray Thee, Lord,
They have sinned
And they have done wickedly
They have transgressed before Thee, Thy people, the house of Israel. . . .

As the people hear God's name in this final context, they fall *korim* a third time, in pure terror. This time as they rise they find reason to hope that, heavy as their sins were, they have been lifted, and are laden entirely upon the head of one scapegoat. They stand up straighter, calm of glance, light of heart. I am convinced these were in the main imperfect Jews, some of them mere splinters. But they worked out a way, a way from without, to surmount their imperfection once a year, and to rejoin wholeheartedly the congregation of Israel. I envy them.

NATURALLY enough, interest shifts at this point from High Priest to scapegoat. As the animal is led from the Temple area, certain Babylonian Jews—ancestors of Iz Goldberger, no doubt—slap his rump and shout: "Bear our sins and begone! Bear our sins and begone!" By ten fixed stations one of the priests leads the scapegoat to a ravine outside Jerusalem. Some congregants rollick along with it part way, others bring back word of its progress, but he who attends it must take the final stage alone. This priest divides the crimson thread, ties half to the animal's curly head and half to a rock; and he pushes the scapegoat down the steep. Afterwards this priest must sit alone at the ravine until nightfall to recover from impurity.

When news reaches the High Priest that the scapegoat's bones have been crushed, "like the potter's vessel," he rises, bathes, and puts on golden garments to perform the last sacrifices. He wears his white linen robes just once again, to fetch forth his incense pan from the Holy of Holies; after that he lays them away forever. And from some simple book—for the High Priest, though immensely purified, was not often a learned man—he reads aloud to the congregation in the women's court.

This was his great day. His face shines like the sun in its strength, for he has brought his people the only kind of redemption that can be measurably complete. A ritual atonement proceeds in accordance with law and measure, it dreads no failure of the human spirit. Automatically, the red becomes as white as snow. A perfect people, white as snow, carries the faithful messenger home on its shoulders, shouting, dancing in the streets. "They are adorned with salvation, and covered with the cloak of righteousness."

Happy the people that is in such a case!
Happy the people whose God is the Lord!

He, their High Priest, prepares a feast for friends in his own home, as a token of his gratitude. For he stood before God, and was not consumed.

Happy the eye that saw all this:
Oh even to hear of it makes our soul sad!

EVEN after Rabbi Saberski has taken us in hand, I wonder: for me and my kind, does the Day of Atonement utterly atone? We wear our new hats and we go to *shul*, we disturb the sermon with our minds rather than our minds with the sermon, and send our fancy woolgathering during the catalogue of sins. In wartime it is terribly affecting to read, "Who shall live? And who shall die?" But by and large we are ignorant of the meanings of the prayerbook and too self-conscious to atone. For us, sometimes, even the miracle of the Land's rebirth is insufficient, though the proclamation of the State of Israel has sent an electric shock to our furthest outposts and caused such a one as Karl Shapiro to write, brilliantly:

When I think of the liberation of Palestine,
When my eye conceives the great black English line
Spanning the world news of two thousand years,

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My heart leaps forward like a hungry dog,
My heart is thrown back on its tangled chain,
My soul is hangdog in a Western chair.

I mailed a copy of this poem from the *New Yorker* to Rabbi Saberski, who wrote back, "Only a bad Jew, an apostate, could have made that poem. Look how he reduces the whole Judaic experience to an admittedly irrational instinct, a tribal urge!"

When I see the name of Israel high in print
The fences crumble in my flesh. . . .

Some of us can lay down our fragmentariness and depart for Israel, where the land and the victory have at this moment power to absolve from sin. Others of us are like the Omaha woman I heard of recently, a very ardent Zionist worker for thirty years, whose only son embarked for the war in Palestine. "What did you expect?" her friends asked the distracted mother. "You raised him in this spirit from infancy on. What did you intend him to do?"

"Not this!" she wailed. "Not this!"

When I think of the battle for Zion I hear
The drop of chains, the starting forth of feet!

Rabbi Saberski used to say: The Temple after Maccabean times was a dead form; it split open, but the Synagogue was there to take its place. Now, he would complain (being as well placed as any man to make the observation), the Synagogue is a dead form, ready to split open. From the break, what new thing will emerge?

YOUR LIFE

MOSHE LEIB HALPERN

WALK around all day and dream that you've a villa by the sea,
And your wife plays the piano and bears with you quietly.
Picture to yourself a child, yours, whose hands are smooth and tiny,
And it strokes your beard and face and can call you Daddy.
Go into a bar and there have entree, soup, meat, and dessert.
Hear your praise; you loathe yourself, but listen with delight.
Wander off to the burlesque show, stare at painted lips, at thighs,
And at vulgar, hanging breasts, moved by a thousand eyes.
Drink until the streets and lamps start to carousel around you,
Nod a street-girl to come over; haggle for a rendezvous.
Cry up to the moon. Look at buildings. Read the ads.
And wander that way, foolish, like a clock without a hand.
Wander foolish, wander useless, till you're bored with life, and then
—Then go home and throw yourself down upon your bed again,
Like yesterday. And smoke and think about yourself and all the rest,
Till it grows quite clear to you that mice are gnawing at dry crusts,
Till you know that everything is fuming smoke like fat aflame,
And that you yourself are only just a watchdog on a chain
And that you must guard your life from the slightest stain or spot
Lest the cat should overturn the inkwell on the tablecloth.
And you must afford no access to a single roaming fly
Bringing with it two or three hungry microbes from outside.

MOSHE LEIB HALPERN (1886-1932) was a Yiddish poet who lived and wrote in America. The present poem was translated from Yiddish by JACOB SLOAN. Halpern's poem "Harshber the Coal Heaver" appeared in COMMENTARY in November 1947.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

THE HOLY

Reflections on a Poem by Jehuda Halevi

FRANZ ROSENZWEIG

FRANZ ROSENZWEIG (1886-1929) was one of the leaders of the "Jewish Renaissance" (Martin Buber was another) that brightened at least one area of German Jewish life under the Weimar Republic. Influenced by Kierkegaard, Rosenzweig was in turn one of the sources for modern religious Existentialism. He stood for a return to a Jewish orthodoxy, though his conception of it was a subject for criticism by the fundamentalists.

As against Buber, Rosenzweig emphasized the importance of Halachah (law); as against the established Orthodoxy, he stressed that the distinctions set up by Jewish law are not once and for all fixed, regardless of the religious situation; as against his teacher, Hermann Cohen, Rosenzweig rejected the neo-Kantian attempt to found Judaism on pure reason. A typical illustration of Rosenzweig's religiosity is the little commentary we publish below on a poem of Jehuda Halevi, "Holy." It appeared, together with a German translation of the poem by Rosenzweig, in the German Jewish magazine *Der Morgen*, in April 1925.

As with Kierkegaard, what Rosenzweig writes here is not homiletics or theology proper; it is a kind of record of religious perception, a steady and cool perception which is as far from mysticism as it is from rational philosophy. Rosenzweig tells us what it is that one sees when one sees with faith—not so much what the faith is.

Worthy of notice is the quality of his style. The literary, the aesthetic was an important aspect of the German Jewish Renaissance, and it is doubtful whether there was ever a group of men who wrote German prose with such consistent distinction and such reverence for the language itself as did Rosenzweig, Buber, and their Jewish friends.—ED.

THE word "holy" in Hebrew has the original meaning of being set apart. God's working is the soft, almost inaudible beginning—but then everything seems to endure just as it was; Creation seems so primeval that it could almost be "eternal," and the voice of conscience so unconditioned that it might almost be called "autonomous." And so it is that true-believing Kantians could arrive at the notion that it would really make no difference if God's authorship of the heavens and of conscience were conceded to the "religious position." But this "position" cannot be so easily gained. God is not merely he who was. He is not merely the foundation bearing the world and men. That indeed is an empty belief, a mere "concession" which lacks the experience of the living present and does not grow out of it. Without a God who powerfully encroaches on our everyday life, the Soft and the Inaudible—which sustains the world and our heart which he created—becomes a fairy tale or, worse, a dogma. It is the holy who defines *him*self and everywhere determines distinction, election, holiness, the unheard-of. Without the obvious miracles of today, the hidden miracles of those days would be invisible—invisible, at least, as miracles. It is only the revelation of the unique that teaches us to honor the Creator in the realm of the natural; it is only the shudders of holiness that sanctify the everyday of the profane.

It is essential to miracle that it be embraced by the living present of holiness and

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so by sanctification. The question as to why no more miracles occur "today" as they "used to" occur, is a simple stupidity. Miracles have never "occurred." The past is a murderous atmosphere for miracles. The Bible itself subsequently explains the miracle of the Red Sea "naturally." Every miracle can be explained after the event. Not because the miracle was no miracle, but because explanation is explanation. The miracle is always in the present and possibly in the future. The miracle can be solicited and experienced, and as long as the presence of the experience continues, one can give thanks; when the presence is effaced, the miracle can only be explained. Every miracle is possible, even the most comic one, even a swimming axe; once it has occurred, men will not be embarrassed for an explanation. The only condition for its occurrence is that it can be solicited. With genuine, will-less prayer, to be sure, not with the intentioned prayer of the magical techniques of a medicine man; only in the latter is there something like a difference in the times when one can pray for something and when one cannot. But when genuine prayer is possible, the impossible becomes possible; where it is not possible, the possible becomes impossible. So it can be possible that the dead arise and impossible that the sick recover. There is nothing impossible in itself, only much that we hold to be so and that we are therefore unable to pray for; and a great deal that we hold to be very possible and which, for whatever reason, we lack the strength to pray for.

There is nothing at all miraculous about a miracle except that it—happens. Hundreds of times, perhaps, has the east wind laid bare the ford in the Red Sea, and it will do so hundreds of times more. But that it happens in the moment of a people's extremest need, that is the miracle. What was but prayed-for future becomes the arriving present. This enrichment of a moment of the present with the past, its past, gives it the strength to endure as a present, not past, moment, and lifts it up from the flow of moments, of which it is yet one. So the miracle becomes the germ of holiness, and holiness endures as long as it is united to its origin, as long as it is miraculous. The distinctions that men seek to make provoke to laughter the Creator who created only one creation and lets it time and again be flooded by outbursting primeval chaos. But the distinctions that God himself makes spread over the whole of creation and reveal in their growing unity and universality the silent secret of the Creation.

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ON THE HORIZON

ADAM AND EVE ON DELANCEY STREET

Milchig and Fleishig Created He Them

ISAAC ROSENFELD

IT IS months now that a crowd, several rows deep, has been gathering at the window of an East Side delicatessen store to watch Kosher Fry Beef come off the slicing machine. The process is simple and uninteresting. A flat chunk of meat is placed in the machine by one girl and received four feet away, at the end of a wire conveyor belt, by another girl, who wraps the slices in cellophane and stuffs them in a little cardboard box. The slicer is perfectly ordinary, the wire conveyor is not worth a second thought, and neither are the girls, both of whom look even more unattractive because of the blue waitress' uniforms, with beige collar and cuffs, that they wear. The chunks of meat are like gnarled pastramis, but resemble greasy driftwood much more than anything edible. Yet the crowd comes on and stands at the window oblivious of the burden of parcels, of errands and of business; no comments are made, they stand in silence, not to interfere with one another's contemplation, as they follow the course of the slices, from the blade to the box. To be sure, some of the spectators may never have seen bacon or its kosher analogue. But what is there in bacon, kosher or *treif*, so to draw a crowd?

I spent I hate to admit how much of my own time in this study of Fry Beef, but learned only that it was a subject peculiarly designed for my own speculation; for I had already published a review in this magazine ("Kreplach," November 1948), showing that our old Jewish joke about the little boy who fears the sight of *kreplach* is related to our older preoccupation with the coming of the Messiah. Here was another mystery of food, to my taste; and I nursed it along, and had even written in my mind the first sentence of my essay, as it stands above. But the days went by, the crowd grew, and still the clue was lacking. I was attempting to locate the primal scene within the lifetime of the spectators, and I would long have continued in this mistake, looking for the appropriate infantile memory to account for the fascination of this spectacle, had it not occurred to me that it was not to the childhood of present adults that I must turn, but to the childhood of our people. Now I am prepared to say that this scene had its origin in Paradise.

WHEN the Lord forbade Adam and Eve to eat of the Tree, He started something which has persisted throughout our history: the attachment of all sorts of forbidden meanings to food, and the use of food in a system of taboos which, though meant to regulate diet, have also had as their func-

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ON THE HORIZON welcomes informal explorations—i.e., *kibbitzes*—on matters high and low. Here the novelist ISAAC ROSENFELD, pondering "Jewish bacon," is led into some speculations on the subterranean relations between sex and *kashruth*. Mr. Rosenfeld is the author of *Passage From Home*, and has contributed stories and criticism to many magazines. He has been on the editorial staff of the *New Republic* and the *Contemporary Jewish Record*. At present he teaches at New York University. In a book review published previously in this magazine, under the title "Kreplach" (November 1948), Mr. Rosenfeld had something to say about the esoteric significance of another Jewish culinary item.

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tion—perhaps the primary one—the regulation of sexual conduct. With their first disobedience, Adam and Eve acquired knowledge of sex (woe to the prospects of clear thought on this subject, that even then this should have been called Knowledge of Good and Evil!). The first food taboo was a sex taboo. Since then we have been subjected, through Biblical and oral law, to an overwhelming number of injunctions against the eating of certain animals and certain parts of others, and have been forbidden to eat blood and enjoined to salt and soak meat, lest any blood remain. The simple act of eating has become for us a complicated ceremonial, from the preparatory phases of ritual slaughter, through *milchigs* and *fleishigs*, kosher and *treif*, to benedictions and postprandial prayers. It is for such reasons, among others, that the Jewish religion enjoys the reputation of being one of the most worldly and immanent, one of the most closely connected with daily life. What Sacred Communion is to Catholics, the everyday mealtime is to Orthodox Jews. He who eats, according to Law, Jewish cooking that has been prepared according to Law, becomes a communicant, in virtue of mere animal hunger, also with a mystical body; and while the Sabbath *chalah* is a special loaf, no consecrated wafer is necessary to this communion by way of the digestive tract. Daily rye or pumpernickel sufficiently embodies the Host.

There is great charm in a religion that can thus run coalesced along the two lines of sacred and secular without any apparent break; it avoids the usual dualism, the conflict in belief of realm against realm. No doubt, the faithful draw some advantage from this harmony, which perhaps can be observed in a balance of character, a sense of being at home in God's world. But dietary laws lead us more directly into the demerits of this system, the first of which is that any blemish in such a smooth course is hard to confine to a single spot and tends to spread over the whole. If our close and continuous touch with the world is anywhere spoiled, as it is, I should say, precisely in the respect of food, the trouble will affect, through the same parallel, anything in this world which our religion has linked with food, all along the line. As our food taboos are also sexually repressive, serious damage occurs.

With the Jewish taboo system in operation direct reference to sex is unnecessary. A well regulated Jewish household, a Kosher Home, takes care of the matter unconsciously—and this is the most harmful method of repression. The direct *verbot* offers at least the advantage of naming the forbidden object; one can be aware of what is going on, and it is always possible to rebel. Where the repression is indirect, a gradual squelching and baffling of the natural impulse takes place; instead of rebellion, there is only perplexity. (An analogous technique, quite apart from any religious atmosphere, can be observed in some "progressive" nurseries. When teacher catches the children masturbating, instead of spanking or scolding them, she rushes up with an armful of dollies.) *Kashruth* should be permitted only to Hasidim. Where a natural enthusiasm and use for joy are lacking, the ideal of a Kosher Home becomes an insidious ruin of life. The food taboos are all that is needed.

It has been observed, I believe also in Commentary, that the hysterical mother who stuffs her infant with forced feedings (thereby laying in, all unwittingly, the foundation for ulcers, diabetes, and intestinal cancer with each spoonful she crams down the hatch) is motivated by a desire to give security to her child. Basic security being unavailable to Jews in a hostile world, food becomes a source of the satisfactions society withholds. The choice of food in this substitution is not accidental. Already a magical object, it is naturally selected to work wonders. The esteem in which this agency is held is shown in the number and prominence of eating establishments in Jewish neighborhoods. In the block of our delicatessen store there are also a restaurant and two lunch counters. Parked at the curb, stands a hot dog wagon bearing a beach umbrella, and next in line, a little metal stove on wheels where you buy baked sweet potatoes, and another for roast chestnuts. The ice cream cart, attended by a man in white uniform, is present every day, as are also several broken laundry baskets of salt stengels ("Why Go Hungry? 3 for 10¢"), with shabby old men and women in charge, and a knish wagon, potato and kasha. Every other day or two there appear on the same block a stall, carrying candies and nuts,

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and a tub, on a wheeled platform, filled with chick peas. All of which is to say nothing of the itinerant peddlers of fruits, vegetables, and ices. There is hardly room for the haberdasheries and men's and ladies' shoe stores, two of a kind, to squeeze in side by side; these have been overshadowed, for they sell stuff of lesser value in which a momentary security, or none at all lies. Eat, eat, eat. Not that we are never sated: food is not food and it cannot satisfy a hunger that is not hunger.

HERE at the delicatessen store the crowd stands in a sexual trance. For Kosher Fry Beef, "Jewish Bacon," is food in the form of the forbidden, an optical pun on kosher and *treif*. *Treifes* is of the whole world of forbidden sexuality, the sexuality of the *goyim,* and there all the delights are imagined to lie, with the *shiksas* and *shkotzim* who are unrestrained and not made kosher. (Pork, as you may learn from the street lore of children in Jewish neighborhoods, means the uncircumcised.) And the businessman stops in his rounds to look at kosher bacon, and the housewife stops at his side, and in their minds thoughts of the golden *shiksa,* wild and unrestrained, and the husky *shaigetz* do or do not appear; no matter, for in the popular sexual culture, where thoughts of the moment are not the issue, these emerge as eternal forms: *shaigetz* and *shiksa* are our yin and yang, the poles of sex. It is sad evidence of the sexual displacement in Jewish living that the sexual forms in the popular Jewish conception should derive not from the Song of Songs or any indigenous source within the presumably rich and close-textured contact with life Judaism maintains, but from a forbidden exogamy, symbolized in food taboos. And, worse, in the end, it is not merely the *shaigetz* and the *shiksa* who are taboo; the sexual object *per se* is *treif;* for within the culture it is overlaid by the all-nourishing mother, the authoritarian father, both under the incest ban. The sex object as lover, for the majority of us, is always out of bounds. (The counterpart of this complex, at the root of anti-Semitism, occurs in the popular sexual culture of the Gentiles in the form of a delusion about the sexual superiority of the Jews, who, represented as a lecherous people, are supposed to enjoy greater freedom from restraint. Our restraining rituals are held to be magical devices for bringing potency to Jews and injury to non-Jews.)

The complex centering in *kashruth* is not the only one that works on sex. There is also *milchigs* and *fleishigs;* and this, I think, is the arch taboo. My own Orthodox grandparents would tremble, as though some catastrophe had occurred, if *milchigs* and *fleishigs* ever came into contact with each other; and with good reason. This is the sexual taboo not only of exogamy, but of the sexuality of the tribe itself. It is the taboo of sex as such. *Milchigs,* having to do with milk, is feminine; *fleishigs,* meat, is masculine. Their junction in one meal, or within one vessel, is forbidden, for their union is the sexual act. (The Jewish joke about the man with cancer of the penis bears this out. He is advised by the doctor to soak his penis in hot water. His wife, finding him so engaged, cries out, "Cancer shmancer. *Dos iz a milchig teppel!*—who cares about cancer? You're using a *milchig* pot.") The measures taken to make kosher again vessels that have come in contact with the opposite food-sex—boiling, burying in the ground—are surely suggestive of the sexual nature of the contamination. They recall the Biblical laws of purification—bathing, lying apart a certain number of hours—for one who has been sexually contaminated by, say, a woman in her period. It is hard to see how anyone could doubt the unconscious sexual quality of the *milchigs-fleishigs* ban in the minds of those who observe it. Otherwise how account for the zeal with which the law dividing *milchigs* from *fleishigs* is upheld by the faithful, and for their explosion into virtual terror at the least infringement? No one takes mere food so seriously.

Meanwhile the crowd gathers at the window where "Jewish Bacon" is cut and packaged, and stands entranced, devouring its totem in a moment of license that stretches out for five, ten, fifteen minutes of a hot, busy day. Reluctantly, still possessed, they tear themselves away, and recovering practical consciousness, rush down the street—to stop again at the corner, where they are lured from *fleishigs* by *das ewig Weibliche* in the form of an egg cream. There is time for a quickie, to try once more to satisfy this hunger which is not hunger, to drown this anxiety in the bottom of a paper cup.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

PHILOSOPHY'S FUTURE IN OUR SCIENTIFIC AGE

Never Was Its Role More Crucial

JOHN DEWEY

FEW persons today would deny that philosophy has greatly declined in esteem and influence since the time when it was held to be the Science of Sciences and the Art of Arts. That its loss in repute and prestige has coincided with the transition from the medieval into the modern age would also be generally admitted. The decline of classic philosophy as *science* has kept even pace with the rise of the natural sciences of astronomy, physics, and physiology, which supplanted the metaphysical cosmology that prevailed before their rise and that provided the content of what was earlier taken to be science.

The falling off of philosophy as science does not compare, however, with its falling off as art. In the latter capacity it was once so supreme as to be in complete control of all the institutions of the Western world: not only the Church but politics and industry were subordinate to control by what, in effect, were sacred arts, consisting of regulations and prescriptions as to what was proper and right, proceeding, as they did, from those who claimed to speak with authority from on high. Following the scientific revolution came the industrial revolution, which in turn brought with it a large number of new arts which were profane as well as secular from the older standpoint.

The fine arts, as well as those of political and economic life, had indeed been so completely subordinated to religious-ecclesiastical arts that they seemed to be a part of the very order of nature. The new arts continually encroached on the old system until they crowded the authority of the sacred arts into a narrow place, where they became specialized and technical. The various divisions thereby created occasioned the dualisms that hold so prominent a place in modern philosophy. As matters of practical living, the divisions then created are now manifested in the present state of worldwide moral confusion and uncertainty.

The industrial overturn coincided with the series of events that constitute the political revolution of the past few centuries. We do not have the phrase "separation of industry and church" to parallel the expression "separation of church and state." But for all practical purposes, the facts are identical in both cases. The word *landlord,* for example, was once full of the significance of the existing political order. Today it is rarely heard save in connection with keepers of hostels and owners of apartment houses. Moreover, replacement of the feudal overlord by the captain of industry speaks eloquently of the transition from the feudal age to the modern. Usury was once a sin; it now consists of those vast mechanisms for supplying credit without which the system of present industry and commerce would collapse into utter chaos.

THE change that has taken place in the arts of living has had an immensely greater

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THIS month national homage is being paid to JOHN DEWEY on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday; and it is with a sense of privilege that COMMENTARY presents here the distinguished philosopher's challenging vision of the role that philosophy—the science of sciences—must play in the years ahead if it is to fulfill its responsibilities to its high mission and to our common human need. This essay embodies, in revised and expanded form, the message sent by Professor Dewey to the International Congress of Philosophy which met in Amsterdam in the summer of 1948.

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impact upon the life of the masses than has the change in science. This latter change is, indeed, highly important *as science*. It transformed matter and motion, and, along with them, the quantitative measurement of change in space and time, into the foundations of natural science. Quite probably, this change is the greatest single *intellectual* alteration that has taken place since man appeared on earth. It represents a total inversion of standards previously employed in all matters of natural science. The subject matter of the science of Greece and of the Middle Ages was saturated with human and moral values. In substance, it was an organization of the materials of the commonsense world —a world impregnated throughout with aesthetic and moral values. The new physical sciences introduced a gulf between the "natural" and the human or "moral." As an example, take the status of *matter*. In ancient science, matter was wholly passive; in the new scientific scheme it is positive and active, even, so to speak, aggressive.

In the classic system, change was of itself sure proof of lack of the immutability that belongs to things that "really" *are*. The central place of motion in the new science of Galileo and Newton displays the revolution that took place. In ancient science, nothing was less important than quantity. As a mere variation between more or less of something or other, it was a mark of the inherent vicissitude and infirmity of Being. Where would natural science be today without systematic use of measurement, direct and indirect? —But why continue? The cornerstones of classic Aristotelian "science" are precisely the things rejected by the constructors and developers of what has scientific standing today.

Nevertheless, while the intellectual revolution was extraordinarily vast, it was *intellectual*, and of prime concern only to members of the intellectual class; in contrast, the change in the arts of living came home to the mass of human beings right where they lived every day of their existence. The industrial revolution that followed the revolution in natural science altered the conditions under which human beings associate together. The change thus brought about was a change in the very *order* of institutions. The family, the home as center of moral education and industry, the school, the legislative hall, the relation of country and city, of people to people in both war and peace, underwent changes that were radical.

With respect to the future of philosophy, it is important to note the changes that have occurred from time to time in the esteem attending the new science. In the earliest period, the "conflict of science and religion" marked the low rank given to science. The opposition of the representatives of the Church to science gave way later to a kind of truce. The practical advantages deriving from inventions, which translated scientific discoveries into instruments of everyday living, resulted in a kind of tacit division of fields. The regulation of all *spiritual*—of moral and ideal concerns—was assigned to the *old* institutions and beliefs. Control of affairs regarded as *material* was assigned —or at least permitted—to the *new* science. In philosophy, the net result was the creation of dualisms that are the intellectual manifestations of the divisions in life between that which is judged low and that which is regarded as supreme in value. Even today this insulation prevails between the subject matter of economic theory and the subject matter of moral theory. It prevails in spite of the fact that most moral problems are now what they are because of the conditions and problems of our economic life.

A much higher rating was given to the natural sciences in the time known as the "Enlightenment." It was an age in which science was hailed as the dawn of a new age in which reason would take charge of human affairs, and which, superseding the age of darkness, would be an epoch of freedom, harmony, and peace. In the 19th century the revolutionary temper of the 18th changed into an evolutionary approach. Towards the close of the 19th century, however, the increase of power in the hands of industrial and financial interests and arts attached the taint of materialism to natural science. The growth of class, national, and racial struggles tended to attach to it the threat of the revolutionary and the radical as well. The net outcome of the historical changes here summarized was to accentuate a sense of inherent difference between moral knowledge and that which is merely "natural."

II

A striking statement of this change of attitude at the end of the 19th century is found in the following passage, which is quoted from a writer who ranks as one of the most distinguished sociologists of the last century. Max Weber wrote: "What did science mean to the men who stood at the threshold of modern

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times? To artistic experimenters of the type of Leonardo and the musical innovators, science meant passage to *true* art and that meant for them the path to true *nature*. . . . And today? Science as the way to nature would sound like blasphemy to youth. Today youth proclaims the opposite: redemption from the intellectualism of science in order to return to one's own nature and thereby to nature in general."

The author then goes on to speak of the time when it was believed that science would and should replace even theology as the only dependable source of knowledge "regarding the ways of God," substituting a genuine revelation for one that had been found to be spurious. He then continued: "Who—aside from big children found in the natural sciences—still believes that the findings of astronomy, biology, physics, or chemistry would teach us anything about the *meaning* of the world?" He pressed home the point with a quotation from Tolstoy, which the latter, he said, affirmed to be the "clearest answer" yet given to the question of the bearing of science on the meaning of life: "Science is meaningless because it gives no answer to *our* question, the only question important for us: what shall we do and how shall we live?"*

The wording of the first sentences of the above passage suggests the German romanticism; but the fact that the remarks about science came from those who had no interest in attacking science from a theological point of view renders it the more impressive. The passage stands as an expression of the transformation of the earlier optimism about science into fear and pessimism; and of late the mere disillusionment with science has passed into bitter hostility toward it. Science seems now to be held accountable for almost all the serious ills that afflict mankind. The earlier view that science was to replace theology as guide for human life has been changed into the view that the only way out of the present turmoil is return to the theological control of life embodied in the institutions of the Middle Ages. It is even held that, if evil is to be averted, natural science must be subjected to the authority of theology.

It would be an easy matter to mention facts which show that the attacks now made upon science are exaggerated and one-sided. Nevertheless, the point at issue cannot be disposed of by drawing up a balance sheet of items that are to the credit of science and those that belong on the debit side. Two facts of importance would still remain unsettled. One of them is that the methods developed and the conclusions reached in natural science constitute the most decisive factor in life as it is now lived all over the world. The other is that the consequences of the entrance of science into life are thoroughly ambiguous and double-faced. There is probably no case in which the good achieved by the intervention of science has not been offset by some evil; while, on the other side, it may be doubted if even the worst of these evils does not have an attendant benefit. Even if this statement of the two-facedness of the effects of science on life is extreme, it is still demonstrably correct that the consequences for good and evil that are wrought are complexly *inter*-wrought. A policy of either wholesale praise or blame is futile. And what is much more serious, the one question worth asking is evaded: how does this doubleness, this ambivalence, in human consequences come about, and what, if anything, can be done about it?

A convincing answer to the first part of this question was recently given in an address on the occasion of an event that not long ago would have been one of unmixed congratulation. The occasion was the installation of the most powerful instrument now in existence for the exploration of secrets of the stellar universe. Yet the speaker, a man who himself has been connected with an organization for the extension of science, spoke the following words: "Knowledge and destruction have joined in a grand alliance. There is no way of telling what particular kind of knowledge is divertable to destruction; no classifying of knowledge into safe and unsafe . . . all knowledge is power; there is no segment of knowledge that cannot ultimately be employed to the detriment of mankind if that is what we elect to do with it."

It would be hard to find a more definite or a more sobering statement of what I called the ambiguity, the two-facedness, of science with respect to good and evil in human life. It would seem, however, as if the speaker might have been expected to go on to point out that since science now plays the decisive part in life, the only way to reduce its destructive consequences, and to further the advantageous ones, would be to bend every effort to obtain the kind of knowledge still lacking. It would seem as if the one thing needful would be to arrive at a

*Cited from Max Weber's *Essays in Sociology*, pp. 141-42, translated and edited by Gerth and Mills. New York, 1944.

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knowledge that would enable us to foresee to some reasonable degree what will come to pass when we put our now internally shaken and confused store of knowledge to actual use.

For one would suppose it to be a mere commonplace that without ability to foresee the consequences of our acts, we are unable to direct and guide the activities we perform. What possibility is there of making wise choices and conducting ourselves intelligently, instead of blindly, unless we can anticipate the results of what we do?

WE CAN hardly pick up a serious magazine today without finding a complaint that our technical knowledge has far outrun our human knowledge. Nevertheless, there are in existence two established institutions that claim to be in possession of the kind of knowledge needed, and they are more than willing to put this knowledge into effect when given the opportunity. Representatives of the Bolshevist Left claim that natural science of a kind so "natural" as to be materialistic needs only to be put systematically into effect, and that the source of existing evils is the existence of institutions that hold another faith. Representatives of the Catholic Right claim that *they* possess the *supra*-natural knowledge that is needed, and that the trouble is the evil will of human beings who refuse to submit to the guidance of that institutionally embodied knowledge.

It is to be expected that the representatives of these institutions should take the stand they do. But it is surprising that those who call themselves "liberals" should fail to see that *the absence of a knowledge genuinely humane* is a great source of our remediable troubles, and that its active presence is needed in order to translate the articles of their faith into works.

III

THE bearing upon philosophy and its future of what has been said is not difficult to perceive. A hiatus exists within scientific inquiry, and it is intimately connected with our present disturbed and unsettled state. It is for the philosophers today to encourage and further methods of inquiry into human and moral subjects similar to those their predecessors in their day encouraged and furthered in the physical and physiological sciences: in short, to bring into existence a kind of knowledge which, by being thoroughly humane, is entitled to the name *moral*. Its absence seems to explain the prevailing worldwide state of uncertainty, suspense, discontent, and strife. It would also seem to indicate with startling clearness that the one thing of prime importance today is development of methods of scientific inquiry to supply us with the humane or moral knowledge now conspicuously lacking. The work needs to be done. It is not of urgent importance that it be done by philosophers, or by any other special group of intellectuals. It is, however, in harmony with the claim of philosophers to deal with what is comprehensive and fundamental that they take a hand, perhaps a leading one, in promoting *methods* that will result in the understanding that is now absent. This type of activity at least seems to be the only way to halt the decline of philosophy in influence and in public esteem and bring about something like restoration.

The problem is certainly not that of putting scientific inquiry under the control of some external institution, whether it be that of the Right or Left. The first step is to recognize that scientific inquiry is still so recent as to be immature and inchoate. It is to recognize that to arrest the development of scientific inquiry at the present stage is, in effect, to guarantee that insecurity, confusion, and strife will perpetuate themselves. What has been accomplished in the development of *methods* of inquiry in physiological and physical science now cries out for extension into humane and moral subjects.

Some twenty-five hundred years ago the forerunner and martyr of European philosophy declared that artisans had knowledge of the material processes and the ends of the activities they carried on. In consequence of this knowledge they were enabled to act intelligently within a very limited sphere. A shoemaker, for example, possessed the knowledge which enabled him to tell whether what was offered as a shoe was a real shoe or one only in appearance. He knew this because he knew the purpose for which shoes were made, and, in addition, knew the materials, the tools, and the processes by which leather or any other material could be made to serve the end in view. In short, in his one limited field he knew what was good and what was bad. The larger and more comprehensive knowledge required by man for the conduct of his more important affairs was not provided by a limited type of knowledge. The existing knowledge served a man as a cobbler but not a man as a member of a community of free men.

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Search for the kind of understanding that was lacking in Athens, Socrates termed philosophy, the love of wisdom. It was to be the Science of Sciences, because the knowledge sought for was so comprehensive that it would enable specialized and technical ways of knowing to be put to use in behalf of a common and shared good.

The similarity of our present situation to that in which Socrates propounded the need for philosophy as a search for a knowledge that was lacking should, it seems to me, be reasonably obvious. The difference between the situations in width and depth is great and obvious. The present world is rather a group of external associations than a community; nevertheless, it repeats on a vast scale the human conditions from which the Socrates of old derived his plea for a devoted search for a knowledge out of which would issue an art that would do for man as man what the lesser arts did for man in minor, because technical, ways. Those philosophers who are now subjected to criticism from their fellow-professionals on the ground that concern with the needs, troubles, and problems of man is not "philosophical," may, if they feel it necessary, draw support and courage from the fact that they are following, however imperfectly, in the path initiated by the man to whom is due the very term *philosophy*.

IV

At all events, and in short, we are here presented with the conditions for finding an answer to the question, "Has philosophy a future?" We are supplied with the conditions, but not with the answer itself. The advance made by science in a comparatively short time is tremendous, but it is partial and out of balance. Its ambivalence with respect to good and evil, to construction and destruction, follows directly from its partial and one-sided estate. I have referred to the complaints now common which are made about the scantiness of our present knowledge about human beings and human affairs in comparison with what is known about distant galaxies of stars and about the equally remote constitution of atoms. What is held in view by the complainants is clear. But there is something in the use of the word "backwardness" that may account for the futility of these complaints. For they seem to suggest that all that is needed is to travel further on the road that natural science has already taken; while others claim that all that is necessary is to subject the uses we make of the scientific knowledge now in our possession to control by the "moral" knowledge we already possess.

The assumption that this latter knowledge is adequate *now and here* to the present strains man labors under is reflected in the appeal to "anchor science to morals" found in the address quoted. If our present store of moral knowledge does not enable us to foresee the consequences for good and evil that will issue from what, after all, is the most widely and deeply determining of all factors now operative in human life, the anchorage it can provide for science (the very science, by the way, that accounts for the *need* of anchorage) seems to be a shoal of sifting sands.

For how can the best moral will in the world provide secure anchorage for its good intentions if those intentions can be put into effect only through the medium of conditions, means, and instrumentalities which *may*—and which, it is admitted, in many cases actually *do*—pervert them from constructive to destructive purposes?

The situation at the very least offers to those who profess love of wisdom a reminder that in matters technical, physical, and now physiological, knowledge gives guidance that can be depended upon in forming policies of action in limited areas. This reminder may well be forcible enough to remind them also that their predecessors did a definite, a needed work, positively—and negatively against entrenched institutional opposition—and that without this work physiological inquiry could not have been brought to its present prosperous technical estate.

If this reminder does not suggest that they, *as philosophers*, have a certain responsibility under the present conditions, it should at least notify them that scientific inquiry is still only partial, one-sided, immature in its development, and that a highly important work in science remains to be done.

In its detail, the work they must do will be harder and slower than that already done. But the obstacles to be met in *initiating* the task are not as entrenched as were those met and conquered by their predecessors. The obstacles now to be met are mainly sluggishness, inertia, discouragement, exhaustion: a statement that applies both without and within philosophy. For while the opposition from institutional sources is vigorous and, temporarily at least, aggressive, its efficacy is not intrinsic, but is derived rather from the absence of organized active opposition

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on the part of those who might be engaged in the endeavor to rectify the existing enormous imbalance between that understanding which gives direction in technical matters and that which is absent just where it is vitally needed.

It is barely conceivable that the existing store of knowledge will undergo throughout the whole world the fate of slavish subjection to external power that it is already undergoing in countries under Bolshevist control. It is not conceivable that the course of physical and physiological knowing will be turned backward in any other way than by some such institutional distortion. What is most to be feared is a continuation of the policy of indifference to the extension, to the development of *methods* of inquiry into *human* conditions—*methods** so basic that their results (and only these) merit the name *moral*. The fact that the professed and professional guardians of morals continue to assert the adequacy of moral standards and points of view that were framed in a society upon which competent understanding of the physical and physiological conditions of human life had not dawned, is one of the obstacles in the way of what needs to be done.

The force of a movement that in its own day and place had a claim to regard itself as "liberal" and as humanly progressive is also obstructive to what needs to be done. For it asserted that all that was necessary was to permit "Nature" to do its own beneficent work. It worked to get rid of some institutional customs and laws that had become humanly oppressive. But it was also a policy of systematic abnegation of the intelligence as a regulative factor in human affairs.

The obvious bad consequences of the policy of drift that ensued resulted in what the unthinking regard as revolutionary: a renewed strengthening of political power to offset the inhuman results of leaving to nature the work of man as man. For the one dependable factor in any policy is an intelligent grasp of the factors involved—an end not to be attained without systematic effort to complete the present one-sided, unbalanced state of "science."

*The word "methods" is italicized as a precaution against a possible misunderstanding which would be contrary to what is intended. What is needed is not the carrying over of procedures that have approved themselves in physical science, but *new* methods as adapted to *human* issues and problems, as methods already in scientific use have shown themselves to be in physical subject matter.

V

THE obstacles are great; but as the two matters just cited indicate, they are those of inertia rather than of vitality; and in any case philosophers are not called upon to conduct that specific work of scientific inquiry upon which depends the ability of human beings to conduct human affairs with foresight and intelligence. Their predecessors did not execute the inquiries in physics that built up knowledge in that area to the point where that knowledge became its own adequate impetus. Their predecessors *did* however take the lead in attacking traditional factors that blocked the way. They contributed positively in no mean measure to development of standpoints and attitudes that passed, in the course of use, into more or less standardized instrumentalities of inquiry. Above all, their communications to the public furthered an intellectual climate which was unfavorable to old traditions and which welcomed with increasing eagerness the new scientific enterprise. Without such a cultural climate even the most important undertakings are born out of due season; they fade and die.

To mankind in general it makes little difference what group does the needed work; and, in any case, the work itself is much too large to be restricted to the members of any one calling. To *philosophers*, however, it is a vital matter that they have an active share in developing points of view and outlooks which will further recognition of what is humanly at stake and of how the necessary work may be initiated. What is called a climate of belief designates conditions so widely extended that they are no longer matters of book knowledge or the exclusive property of an intellectual class. The history of physical science demonstrates the large part that has to be played by cultural conditions which transfer what is *called* "knowledge" from a theoretical or intellectual possession into habitual, taken-for-granted, working attitudes of everyday use. There has of course to be willingness to hear and absorb, but that willingness is of a radically different sort from a conscious act of "will." Campaigns of persuasion and education carried on by those of ardent faith are intrinsic parts of the effective initiation of any new movement.

The philosophers who promoted the new movement in physical inquiry did not find it necessary to disown or conceal their ardent belief that the success of that movement was of high human importance. I do not know why

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their successors are called upon to behave differently in a matter that directly, not in a roundabout way, concerns on one side the future of human welfare and, on the other, the continuance of misery, uncertainty, instability, and strife. When knowledge possesses men instead of being something held in possession by them, its passage into activity is a matter of course. And knowledge does not possess men until it is heavily charged with that emotive faith in its value which impels action. Generous imagination and wide and liberal sympathies are needed to carry on the required activities. But what are these attributes save those which the adventurous thinkers of the past have claimed to belong to philosophy as a supremely liberal pursuit?

There is rife a peculiar notion that to suggest that philosophers have a specifically human office to perform is to propose that they be detached from the intellectual activity appropriate to them and converted into social reformers. The notion is so peculiar that it looks as if those who put it forth are moved by a covert defense-reaction in behalf of the human remoteness of the sort of philosophical discussion in which they are personally engaged. For the work that needs to be done *is* at the present juncture primarily *intellectual;* while the subject matter involved is of such supreme importance that it—and, I submit, it *alone*—satisfies that claim to universality or comprehensiveness of scope which was made when philosophy was a vital factor in life. This subject matter is not something factitiously added by the zeal of those occupied with it; it is that which is important to man as man. The fact of its crucial human importance does not detract from its status as *intellectual;* it does add to its power to move to action, once it is appreciated for what it is.

Even were there space for a consideration of what philosophy will specifically consist of in the future, it would contradict what has been said to attempt even to list its articles of doctrine. What has been said is not said in the interest of any existing variety or brand of philosophical doctrine—though it is likely that some among contemporary forms of thought are further on the way and therefore more promising than others. What is at stake is a definite change in the *direction* of philosophical inquiry; and it is in the interest of the *future* of philosophy that the present discussion is conducted. What is said is said in behalf of a future for philosophy as broad and as penetrating as that claimed by metaphysical and theological systems in their days of utmost vigor; but a philosophy that is to be fully relevant to a new age in which issues flow from natural science, and not from a supra-natural world or from a philosophy purporting to deal with what is super-mundane and super-human.

The position here taken is not hostile to systems of the past in so far as they were humanly relevant in their own days; it is hostile to them in so far as it is now attempted, in the interest of some particular institution, to blow their dying embers into a transient glow. For the sparks thereby emitted will give neither light by which to see nor heat by which to convert what is seen into conduct that refers to the well-being of man.

Can philosophers hope for a more arduous task or for a more inspiring cause to which to devote their intellectual efforts than the intellectual struggle lying ahead?

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LETTERS FROM READERS

The Knickerbocker Case

To the Editor of Commentary:

"The Knickerbocker Case: A Report on the Current Crusade," by Morris Freedman, in the August issue of Commentary, is a curious medley of fact and fancy. Little wonder that Mr. Freedman is confused by the events on the City College campus and the role of organizations like the Hillel Foundation and the American Jewish Congress, which for years have called for a full investigation of the charges against Professor Knickerbocker. For Mr. Freedman has accepted *in toto* the view of the defenders of Knickerbocker.

At the same time, for an objective reporter he appears to have only a second-hand acquaintance with the basic documents in the case against the Professor. He does not even know that the primary purpose of the present appeal to the State Commissioner of Education is to request a trial of Dr. Knickerbocker. But where knowledge fails, fancy may fill in.

1. Mr. Freedman mentions a Congress "study," purporting to have shown that there was insufficient evidence on which to base a legal action against Knickerbocker. This Mr. Freedman has identified for me as an *Analysis of the Record* (of the evidence taken by the Faculty Investigating Committee), submitted by the Congress to the Board of Higher Education September 10, 1946. The intent of the *Analysis* is to point out the flagrant inadequacies in the Faculty Committee's investigation of Dr. Knickerbocker. It marshals what evidence has been produced in spite of an "inadequate" investigation and reaches the conclusion that there are sufficient grounds to take action. For example:

"We have already stated our view that the [faculty] hearings and investigations which have been held in these proceedings have been far from adequate. Yet even the inadequate record discloses sufficient evidence from which this [faculty] Committee can make positive findings. . . .

"The evidence as to each of these charges supports the others. Viewed as a whole they indicate in our opinion, a philosophy and program of anti-Semitism. . . .

"We are impelled, therefore, to the conclusion that Professor Knickerbocker does not possess the character for the high office he holds."

The *Analysis* recommends a re-organization of the department of romance languages, the retirement of all professors eligible therefor, and, specifically, of the Chairman (Professor Knickerbocker). It ends with this statement:

"If the Committee still has doubts as to Professor Knickerbocker's incapacity for office or as to the need for a drastic re-organization of the Department, we recommend an open hearing in which additional testimony can be taken, supplemented by an examination of the applications and records material to this inquiry."

It is clear that Mr. Freedman's article in Commentary distorted the clear intent of the Congress *Analysis* and its unequivocal findings in a "study" which he represented as having virtually exonerated Knickerbocker of any guilt.

2. Mr. Freedman's statement on the role of the uptown City College Hillel unit is similarly fanciful:

"It is apparently on the basis of such considerations [that Knickerbocker made derogatory remarks about Jews] that Hillel in the early stages of the discussion urged merely that Knickerbocker resign from the chairmanship of his department and possibly retire altogether from the faculty on his regular pension."

Mr. Freedman's "apparently" and "possibly" in the quotation above cover the lack of any direct knowledge. Actually this *Report* described Professor Knickerbocker's *specific acts* of a purported anti-Semitic nature as well as statements he had allegedly made *in his official capacity as an administrator* in the College, and unequivocally recommended Dr. Knickerbocker's retirement from the staff, as the Congress *Analysis* had done. It also requested that Morton Gurewitch be declared the winner of the Ward medal for 1942—which was finally conceded in 1948.

Mr. Freedman conveys the impression that leftist maneuvering was responsible for the support of the CCNY Student Council Strike by our Hillel Foundation. This is not the case. The Hillel *Report*, published in March 1947, was the first to reveal that as late as January

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1947 Gurewitch's records held an "incomplete" in Honors I, although in actuality he had earned an "A" in May 1942, at the time of his graduation, and hence had a perfect "A" record in all courses in French. This discovery, by student investigators, clearly reflected on the adequacy of the investigations by the College authorities and Board of Higher Education, and justified the Congress's judgment of the Faculty investigation. *The Faculty had based its dismissal of the Ward medal charge against Knickerbocker on the incorrect record.* The Board of Higher Education relied altogether on the Faculty's findings. It did not take up the charge that Knickerbocker had denied the medal to Gurewitch solely on the basis of religion, having allegedly declared to Professor Muller who recommended him, "That fellow Gurewitch may be an excellent student, but he is a Jew." The defense now offered of a "clerical error" in the Dean's office is completely irrelevant. For Professor Knickerbocker admitted in the City Council investigation that in determining the winner of the medal, he consulted with the very Professor who turned in Gurewitch's grade of "A." He testified further that even if Gurewitch had taken another Honors course in addition to Honors I, he doubted that he would have given him the medal.

Since 1947, the Uptown CCNY Hillel student group has not altered its position of urging a full and open investigation of Professor Knickerbocker on the grounds of the new evidence which it presented. It called for an inquiry by the New York City Council and led a delegation to the Mayor's office for that purpose. In June 1948 the City Council, by a vote of 16 to 0 with 2 abstentions, found Knickerbocker guilty of "reprehensible and unworthy" conduct, called for his retirement before the Fall semester 1948, and requested his removal as chairman of the romance languages department in the event that he did not voluntarily retire. Dr. Knickerbocker and the college authorities ignored the City Council on the grounds of "academic freedom." Our Hillel Foundation endorsed the student body appeal to the State Commissioner for a formal hearing of the charges against Knickerbocker. It also supported the CCNY Student Council strike in April 1949, as a method of bringing the controversy over Knickerbocker and Davis to an end by a trial of both men.

3. Mr. Freedman's statements about "the crusading vengefulness" of the action against Professor Knickerbocker are likewise misleading. Mr. Freedman quotes from unnamed "Jewish organizations" in illustration of a hysterical attitude on Knickerbocker but none of these quotations are from Hillel sources, although the uninformed reader might easily draw such an incorrect inference. The letter of the four faculty complainants ends with a strong demand for trial of the accused: "We therefore ask . . . that the incriminated . . . be promptly brought to justice"; but this cannot reasonably be stretched to mean what Mr. Freedman says it does, namely, that "charges alone, to the complainants and their friends, were sufficient grounds for the carrying out of sentence." If among "friends" of the complainants he included the City College Hillel Foundation or the American Jewish Congress, his statement is entirely without justification. If Mr. Freedman means to say that the leftist section of the metropolitan press and their few representatives on the campus saw an opportunity in the Knickerbocker scandal of excoriating "bourgeois decadence" without regard to the niceties of judicial procedure, let him say so, without intimating that our Hillel and the Congress acted as their dupes.

4. I consider Mr. Freedman's most serious misrepresentation to be that the City College student body, as a group, acted without sufficient knowledge of the facts, discarded all concern for judicial process and civil rights, and gave themselves over to a hysterical binge. Anyone at all acquainted with the City College student must be surprised at such a judgment. The number of man-hours spent by City College students last year on study and discussion of the Knickerbocker and Davis cases, in and out of class, over the lunch table or on the subway, is beyond my power to compute. A vast amount of material was distributed, and carefully read and discussed. Scores of students have a thorough knowledge of all facets of the Knickerbocker and Davis cases, and the State Education Law, in strong contrast with Mr. Freedman's second-hand acquaintance. Some of these students have submitted their findings to college officials and have attended President Wright's forums. Unlike Mr. Freedman, most of them have come away from such conversations with the conviction that only a full, formal hearing of the charges against the men involved could ever finally settle the issue.

Briefly and in an off-hand manner, Mr. Freedman does mention the purpose of the student strike correctly as being an effort to secure a trial of Knickerbocker and Davis, and their suspension pending trial. However, since this fact conflicts with his major premise that the students acted out of hysteria without regard for civil liberties, his discussion distorts the purpose of the student action into a demand for the summary dismissal of Knickerbocker without regard for due process of law.

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It is a fact, nevertheless, that at every opportunity the student leaders made clear their concern for judicial process. At the crucial moment of the strike last April, the college publicity bureau had full access to the general metropolitan press and the national press services. The authorities stigmatized the student strike as "lynch justice." Knickerbocker and Davis raised the cry of "Communism." (For doing so, they now have a libel suit on their hands.) From then on, the students did not have a chance to present their position in the press until near the end of the strike action, with the notable exception of the New York *Post*. They had to resort to an advertisement paid for by forty pints of blood sold by as many students. They took to distributing throwaways. One such statement said: "Remember! We Are Striking For Open Fair Trials—Not Ouster Without Trial. Do Not Misrepresent the Issues."

They wrote a letter to the college teaching staff of which Mr. Freedman is a member at the Downtown Center: "We have repeatedly asked for clear and definitive action in the form of an open trial."

They listed the charges in formal resolutions to President Wright and Ordway Tead, Chairman of the Board of Higher Education, and concluded:

"Therefore, we . . . hereby request a formal trial be held and these charges given consideration, since no trial has ever been held on these charges at any time by anybody, and up to the present, Professor Knickerbocker has suffered no penalization in any form. We further request suspension pending trial."

The objective of the student strike of April 1949 conformed to the requirements of democratic judicial process as prescribed by law. The student leaders know that a member of the faculty who enjoys tenure, as does Professor Knickerbocker, cannot be removed from the staff without preferment of formal charges and a trial. They formulated their demands accordingly. Also, they removed from the picket line those posters which did not conform with the professed aims of the strike. Only teachers in the college like Mr. Freedman, who have no permanent status, can be dropped without preferment of charges, or indeed any explanation at all. Nevertheless, in summarizing the action against Knickerbocker, Mr. Freedman writes:

"Jewish groups that couldn't automatically align themselves with those demanding Knickerbocker's summary dismissal were embarrassed. If one took a stand for Knickerbocker's right not to be fired, it was possible to be accused of anti-Semitism." Mr. Freedman has imputed to the students the calumny of demanding summary dismissal without trial. This is his fancy, hardly the fact. An alert and intelligent student body has acted on a vitally important issue. Naturally, their reaction to evil in their own community is likely to be intense and vigorous without being necessarily hysterical or disdainful of civil liberties.

THERE may be details of the student action which their own leadership deplores. One may also lack enthusiasm for the demand for immediate suspension, pending trial, of the men under charges, although the students offered precedents for such action from the recent history of the College. One will also mark carefully the irrational statements of the few extremists and their eagerness to fish in muddy waters. But this is a peril that all fighters for a just cause must face today; such dangers are endemic in the contemporary struggle for power. And the recognition of these risks need not frighten us from our objectives or paralyze us with inaction; certainly they do not invalidate a cause if indeed it is just.

It is essential that an evaluation of the struggle to eliminate religious and racial discrimination in a publicly-supported university be capable of distinguishing the wheat from the chaff. In a complex situation like the Knickerbocker scandal, this will necessarily require considerable skill as well as a thorough acquaintance with all the facts. Instead, Mr. Freedman's article has befuddled the facts and bedevilled the issues almost beyond repair—whether it deals with the charges against Dr. Knickerbocker, the rickety defense, the student action or the present status of the case. He has provided the defenders of the *status quo* with another "Jew" whom they can quote; he has provided the leftists with another example of the "befuddled liberal."

In conclusion, Mr. Freedman is a tutor in the English department of the City College. This should not endow him with the immunity of poetic license in the discussion of a moral and legal problem. But it would appear to be an essential fact in the *curriculum vitae* of the author of an article on the Knickerbocker scandal, would it not?

RABBI ARTHUR ZUCKERMAN
B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation
The City College of New York (Uptown)

Mr. Freedman Replies

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There are a few points in Rabbi Zuckerman's letter which call for comment. The rest, while it is sometimes interesting, is largely irrelevant to my article, except in the nature of heckling

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footnotes—taking issue with an adverb, objecting to the "tone," and so on. Some of his arguments I find simply incoherent.

1. With reference to Rabbi Zuckerman's first point, my article stated: "The American Jewish Congress, which was interested in finding a legal basis for the removal of Knickerbocker, conducted a preliminary search of the facts and concluded at that time that there was insufficient evidence on which to base a legal action." Obviously, I did not say, as Rabbi Zuckerman in summary says I did, that the Congress, "virtually exonerated Knickerbocker of any guilt." Just as obviously, all of Rabbi Zuckerman's quotations from the Congress's study do not alter the fact that the Congress found "insufficient evidence on which to base a legal action." That the Congress, which sponsors an active Committee on Law and Social Action, could intervene with legal action only recently, through the very indirect route of an appeal of Bach-y-Rita and Pollinger to the State Commissioner of Education to be restored to the promotion list, would seem only further to prove my point.

2. Rabbi Zuckerman does not dispute my statement (though appearing to do so) that in the beginning Hillel did not call for Knickerbocker's *dismissal* but merely recommended that he *retire*.

On the medal business: even after the record is corrected, the student who received the medal, Mr. Ramondino, had a record virtually the equivalent of Mr. Gurewitch's. In any case, it is not a custom at the City College, nor at many other places, to award academic honors mechanically. Elements of discretion and selection always enter in. It may be noted that during the first five-year period of Professor Knickerbocker's tenure, before any public charges of anti-Semitism were made, ten Ward Medals were awarded in Spanish and French, five to Jews.

3. Rabbi Zuckerman interprets my every comment about the actions of Jewish groups as referring to Hillel. Looking back, I find only two references to Hillel in the article, each time in a specific context. My original feeling, clearly expressed in the article, was that Hillel played a moderating and sensible role in the proceedings. After reading Rabbi Zuckerman's letter, I see that I may have been wrong.

4. I nowhere stated that City College students as a body acted out of hysteria, as Rabbi Zuckerman says I did. It is another matter, however, to say that they "made clear their concern for judicial process." Such a concern is not demonstrated by the insistence on immediate suspension and on a "trial." Just what kind of "trial" is involved here is puzzling, since it is neither a trial in a court of law nor a trial as defined by standard university procedure. President Wright has said: "By all the provisions of the laws and the by-laws governing the Board of Higher Education, Professor Knickerbocker has been thoroughly investigated and no justification has been found for punitive action." Apparently, Rabbi Zuckerman has his private code of law.

Unless Rabbi Zuckerman is more explicit concerning the relevance of my teaching at the College to the article, I would prefer to ignore his concluding innuendo.

Rabbi Zuckerman's production is more than a monumental misreading of my article. It is itself a piece of evidence in the case, proving how incapable are some of the involved persons of reading any comment on the affair at variance with their own interpretation without shooting off an aimless head of steam. Most of the details Rabbi Zuckerman objects to could be plucked from the article without in any way affecting the total picture I tried to draw, which was one of a crusade that got out of hand.

MORRIS FREEDMAN

New York City

Another View

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have read with considerable interest Morris Freedman's discussion of the Knickerbocker case. Most of the published accounts of this case have been so intensely *ex parte* and so distorted by emotional partisanship that COMMENTARY has rendered a real service in presenting this temperate and unbiased report. Those close to the incidents described may disagree with Mr. Freedman as to certain minor details, but on the whole he has given a fair and judicious report.

On the campus as at the Hillel Foundation at CCNY Downtown, student leaders would agree wholeheartedly with the "thoughtful Jewish community leader" whose opinion was quoted in Mr. Freedman's final paragraph as a fitting conclusion for his article. I would add that the story published in Communist propaganda organs to the effect that "reactionary pressures on Hillel stemming from the hush-hush policy of B'nai B'rith . . . was responsible for the failure of Hillel chapters of other colleges to support the strike" is sheer nonsense. The only pressures exerted on the students at City College Downtown came from those who backed the strike, and the students refused to join the strikers only because of their logical appraisal of the facts which have been in the main so well presented by Mr. Freedman.

RABBI VICTOR EPPSTEIN

B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation
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BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Jewish Joke

L'CHAYIM! Jewish Wit and Humor Gathered and Edited by IMMANUEL OLSVANGER. Schocken Books. 192 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by NATHAN GLICK

THE overwhelming impression left by this collection of Jewish wit and humor is that there exists no sense of humor like it in the world. This is true even though Olsvanger cites parallel anecdotes from Italian, Japanese, and Indian sources and even though we may come across a few examples in Americanized adaptations. ("Why did Adam live so long?—Because he had no mother-in-law.") It is questionable, however, whether anyone who has not heard Yiddish in his childhood, with its particular rhythms and cadences and its typical inflections, can wholly enjoy this humor, for so much of it depends on the telling (or the reading). That is why the careless, tin-eared translations into English of the short jokes in Ausubel's *Treasury of Jewish Folklore* fall so flat. Immanuel Olsvanger has solved (by avoiding) both the problem of audience and the problem of translation. He has simply transliterated the original Yiddish, in all its flavor and obstreperousness, into Roman script, so that as the eye reads sentences written in the Roman alphabet, the ear pronounces them in a nearly-forgotten but still vivid Yiddish.

Emerson learned German in order to read Goethe; it would be a fascinating experiment for a Gentile with a reckless love of wit to learn Yiddish in order to read *L'Chayim* and its predecessor *Royte Pomerantsen* (and, of course, all of Sholom Aleichem). What would he make of the stories contrasting Jew and Gentile, with their bitterness balanced by self-irony, sometimes even within the same tale? *L'moshl* (for example): A Jew dies and asks to be shown hell. He is told there are two hells, one for Jews and one for Gentiles. Why? Maybe, the narrator remarks, to see Jews suffer is Paradise for Gentiles. (*Efsher is dos darfar, vayl avu goyim ze'en, vi idn mutshen zach, is dos far zey a gan-eydn.*) But while the hells are separate, they are similar. In both, the victim stands in front of a pot of meat with a fork long enough to reach the meat but too long to put it in his mouth. Yet the Gentiles are fat, while the Jews are lean. Why? A simple matter. (*A poshete zach!*) Gentiles worry about one another and feed one another, but a Jew wants everything for himself. Or take the story, *"Idn Un Antissemitn,"* which is a satire on the inconsistency of principle and practice. What distinguishes a Jew from an anti-Semite? The anti-Semite calls Jews a detestable, thieving race, but has a kind word for each particular Jew that he knows. The Jew says of his people that they are chosen by God, a fine, wise, and intelligent nation (*Idn, dos is doch an amhamivchor, di faynsste ume, an amchochom-v'novoyn*), but Berlen is a dog, as ugly as they come, Yits'choch is immoral, a pigsbone, and so forth for each individual Jew.

This joke, like so many others, is intended as an impious reply to thoughtless repetition and cant. It is therefore aimed not at the Gentile but at the complacent Jew. Like most impiety, it adopts its half-truth with an arrogance that refuses to recognize the riper wisdom of the half-truth it opposes. But this, precisely, is the function of these jokes: to correct, balance, modernize, and throw doubt on the omnipresent dogma of Jewish Orthodoxy. Living as we are in a milieu of sanctified un-orthodoxy, some of this humor strikes us as childishly rebellious or cruel. But projected into the milieu of Central and Eastern European Jewry prior to World War I, we recognize its role as a belated weapon of the Enlightenment. (With the loss of this role and the Orthodox atmosphere in which it functioned, there has been a parallel decay of Jewish humor.) It enthrones the particular, unregenerate fact in place of the universal and traditional belief. A wonderful brief anecdote tells of the Hasid who hears a sermon on the dis-affirmation of reality and is deeply moved by the non-existence of earth, sky, and all

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things. An empty dream! So meditating, he hits his head by accident against the stove, and reflects: *"Vayzt aus, as a ribe iz a ponim ye do."* ("It seems that a stove probably exists.") Here is caught the paradox of Jewish character: a naive philosophical idealism alongside of a reluctant but irrepressible respect for physical fact.

With the same double edge, the Jewish joke expresses an impish logic which burlesques Talmudic reasoning while it defends itself against Orthodoxy by adhering to the letter of the Law. A Hasid sins, repents, and is told that as punishment he must wear peas in his shoes for a week; he obeys . . . but first he cooks the peas! A storekeeper accused by the Rabbi of doing business on the Sabbath replies: "If I sell my merchandise at half price, you call that business?" And a young scholar reasons with the Rabbi to justify his eating on Tisha b'Av: "If I am dangerously ill, then may I eat?"—"But you don't look ill."—"How does it harm you that a young Jew is, thank God, healthy?" (*Vos art aych, as a idisher yungeman iz, boruch hashem, gezunt?*)

THESE self-interested hairsplitters are the product of a unique society of scholars. Here we find the image of the Jew as an intellectual and his alter ego, the Jew as a deadly satirist of the intellectual. Brought up on the Talmud, he is taught respect for learning; but brought up on the Talmud, he also learns the devious uses of the apparatus of learning. Where else in folk humor will you find a man who complains of being sick because he talks to himself—but the doctor also talks to himself—*"Ye, dokter! Ober ir veysst nit, vossara nudnik ich bin!"* ("Yes, doctor, but you don't know what a bore I am!") And where else among "simple people" will you find such devastating jokes about would-be authors? Or such hilarious "examples" of the meaning of relativity? (For example, let's say that a girl comes to the rabbi; so what? So the girl's a girl and the rabbi a rabbi; but what if the rabbi goes up to a girl? Neither is the girl a girl nor the rabbi a rabbi. This is called relativity.)

This community of intellectuals, however, is composed exclusively of men; and these anecdotes are told by, and concern, only men. On such negative evidence, the Jewish female is not a jokester, or if she is, she has failed to locate her Boccaccio or her Olsvanger. Her slight part in these stories is consistently unflattering. She appears either as the shrewish wife or the daughter to be married off, that is, an unhappy product of nature which must somehow be dealt with. But while she is excluded from the official and intellectual community, she reigns blatantly in the home. We recognize in the Jewish jokes about nagging wives the male worm turning, the rancor of the henpecked husband. A widower who has survived six wives goes to heaven. Which of his six wives shall he now take? The first. Why? The longer a wife lies in the earth, the better she is. (*Mit a idene is azoy: vos mer zi ligt in der erd, als besser iz zi.*) Only one of the anecdotes, tracing the origin of the caustic salutation *"Skotsl kumt,"* recognizes the problem of social inequality from the woman's point of view, but its satirical moral is the futility of hoping for any change.

In fact, the only optimism expressed is one based on an expectation of the worst. "They mock at foolishness, hypocritical piety, ignorance, and indifference to knowledge," writes Olsvanger. True, but they also mock at knowledge itself, because they despair of changing the world—in particular, their world. What else is the point of the most Jewish of Jewish jokes: *Far vos entfert a id shtendig mit a kashe? —Far vos zol er nit entfern mit a kashe?* (Why does a Jew always answer with a question?—Why shouldn't he answer with a question?)

Liberalism's Enemies

THE VITAL CENTER: THE POLITICS OF FREEDOM. By ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR. Houghton Mifflin. 274 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by IRWIN ROSS

IN TRADE parlance, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. has produced a "package job"—and quite a good one. *The Vital Center* is a compact summation of liberal opinion on every issue that even remotely agitates liberals. It is a dextrously seamed patchwork of history, philosophical speculation, political analysis, covering the whole vast territory of domestic and foreign policy.

Schlesinger admittedly breaks no new ground in this effort; he offers few novel thoughts; his success, rather, lies in the precision, vitality, and emotional power of his restatement of commonly accepted views. He has seldom written

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The Code of Maimonides

BOOK FOURTEEN

The Book of Judges

Translated from the Hebrew

By A. M. HERSHMAN

This volume offers the first translation ever made of Book Fourteen of the monumental *Code of Maimonides,* compiled in the latter part of the twelfth century, and the most systematic and exhaustive work of codification in the entire realm of rabbinic literature. The present book consists of five Treatises covering the laws concerning the Sanhedrin, Evidence, Rebels, Mourning, and Kings and Wars. Throughout the translation the main objective has been to render the meaning of the Hebrew text into precise and understandable legal English.

This is the third volume in the *Yale Judaica Series.* Volume II, Book XIII of the Code, THE BOOK OF CIVIL LAWS ($5.00), translated from the Hebrew by Jacob J. Rabinowitz, initiated the plan of including in the series a translation of the fourteen volumes of *The Code of Maimonides,* together with a fifteenth volume which will be a critical appraisal of the Code in its entirety. $5.00

Yale University Press

New Haven Connecticut

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better prose—a lean and pliant style, edged with wit and paradox, equally capable of flashing satire and fine sonorities of exhortation.

Schlesinger addresses himself to three major concerns: the causes of our present malaise; the character of the totalitarian threat; the "strategy and tactics of a democratic counter-offensive."

The argument is a familiar one. Schlesinger finds the "failure of the Right" in the inability of the business community to rise above personal and class interests; the "failure of the Left" in the susceptibility of sentimental progressives to Soviet press-agentry. Both the traditional short-sightedness of the businessman and the insipidities of the "doughface" progressive, if unchecked, would disarm us in face of the totalitarian challenge represented by Russia. Only a tough-minded "radical democracy," eclectic in doctrine, pragmatic in method, uncompromising in its faith in freedom but agreeably compromising in its choice of economic forms, can save the commonwealth. Programmatically, Schlesinger is for a limited state, a pluralist economy; and in foreign affairs, an alliance with the democratic Left in every country from Siam to Bechuanaland.

Schlesinger's book typifies the strengths and weaknesses of current thinking among the non-Communist Left (he prefers the term to "liberals" or "progressives"). The tone of the book is disenchanted, far removed from the sunny faith in human perfectibility and inevitable progress. A bracing realism characterizes Schlesinger's treatment of the Soviet debacle, the myth of the proletariat, the weird deviltry of the local Muscovites, and the labyrinthine dialectics of Wallesia. And as an economic renovator, Schlesinger has learned well the lesson John Chamberlain phrased for our generation: "Freedom dwells in the interstices of the economic systems."

But Schlesinger's book suffers from the defects of its virtues. Its realism about the Communist threat has resulted in a rather common imbalance: the imbecilities on the far Left get too much space, the reactionary threat not enough.

This is by design: "not because reaction is the lesser threat, but because it is the enemy we know. . . . It is perhaps our very absorption in this age-old foe which has made us fatally slow to recognize the danger on what we carelessly thought was our left. . . ." But today such recognition is widespread; Schlesinger's warning would have been more to the point in 1945 or 1938.

A graver defect in the book is that Schlesinger actually seems to have little fear of reaction. He has taken over Professor Schumpeter's argument that the evolution of capitalism has led not only to the "obsolescence of the entrepreneurial function" but to the gradual decay of businessmen's self-confidence, pugnacity, and, indeed, their very devotion to the rights of property. The growth of corporations has led to the depersonalization of property; soon there will be few businessmen willing to die on the steps of their factories. And as the entrepreneur's will-to-resist atrophies, Schumpeter continues, the rest of the bourgeois strata will acquiesce in the emergence of socialism. Schumpeter argues the thesis with admirable logic in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. The only trouble with his theory is that it does not square with visible fact. But then comes the joker at the end of Schumpeter's argument: he is describing, he says, a long-run tendency; "and in these things, a century is a 'short run.'" Schlesinger, however, fails to enter this qualification.

Schlesinger's underestimation of business resistance leads to some curious appraisals: in Britain we have "a broadly responsible conservatism, which today is collaborating in its own liquidation." (Interesting news to the Labor party—or is opposition short of the barricades collaboration?) And again: another depression in the United States "will inevitably mean a vast expansion in government ownership and control. The private owners will not just submit to this. In characteristic capitalist panic, they will demand it."

Faced with such reassuring prospects, there isn't much need for liberal "strategy and tactics." The problem for liberals, it would seem, would be to keep their hands clean, their faith pure, and their élan high. Schlesinger hardly means this, and yet if his advice is followed, liberals will be woefully unprepared, come the next crisis, if businessmen do not turn out to be eleventh-hour socializers. In Britain, the transition has so far been serene, not because resistance has evaporated, but because the opposition was in large part outmaneuvered. British labor, among other things, learned the lessons of the two MacDonald governments. But to outmaneuver an opponent, you must recognize him. Schlesinger is a little vague as to his lineaments.

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Coming October 17 — A Special Issue

John Dewey

in celebration of his 90th birthday

IN THE December 19, 1914 issue of the *New Republic,* the lead article was "A Policy of Industrial Education," by JOHN DEWEY. The magazine was then barely six weeks old, Dewey fifty-five years.

From that time forward and through the twenties and thirties, JOHN DEWEY wrote regularly and often in the *New Republic.* At least two of his numerous books grew out of series of articles first published in this magazine.

Now, thirty-five years after his first contribution, it is most fitting that the *New Republic* should devote an entire issue to honoring America's most distinguished living philosopher and educator on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday.

The issue, edited by Robert L. Hatch and James R. Newman, has been in preparation for months. The list of contributors that follows includes the well-known names of scholars and writers best acquainted with Dewey's vast and enduring contributions to American thinking and conduct.

IRWIN EDMAN — Columbia — *on* ART
BOYD H. BODE — Florida — *on* EDUCATION
GEORGE BOAS — Johns Hopkins — *on* LITERATURE
RALPH BARTON PERRY—Harvard—*on* PHILOSOPHY
ERNEST NAGEL — Columbia — *on* SCIENCE
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CLARENCE E. AYRES — Texas — *on* ECONOMICS
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"Know-How" Is Power

PUNISHMENT WITHOUT CRIME. By S. ANDHIL FINEBERG. Doubleday. 337 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by GRANVILLE HICKS

PUNISHMENT WITHOUT CRIME, subtitled "What *You* Can Do About Prejudice," is intended to be a handbook in the struggle against intolerance. Dr. Fineberg does not waste time in denouncing bias and discrimination, but assumes that the reader is a person of good will who knows they are evil and wants to do something about them. What the reader can do, both by himself and in cooperation with others, is the book's theme. One section discusses discrimination in employment, education, public accommodation, and housing. Another, called "Guises and Disguises of the Enemy," is concerned with hate organizations, rabble-rousers, hate writers, ruffians, tricksters, etc. A third, "Allies and How You Can Help Them," lists specific ways in which clergymen, teachers, parents, writers, police, researchers, and others can work for tolerance.

Many prominent persons have endorsed the book, and it is the kind of book that any foe of prejudice must endorse—at least up to a point. My own objections, as will be seen, are marginal. They begin, in fact, with a complaint against the style and tone of the book, and only tentatively reach out to more fundamental issues.

I became uneasy while I was reading the first chapter. "To get started," Dr. Fineberg writes, "let's take four case studies, in each of which certain people were confronted by serious problems due to intolerance. As you read what happened in each of these four instances ask yourself, 'What would I have done had I been confronted by that problem?' Compare your own decision and its likely consequences with the course actually taken. Would you have done something less effective, equally helpful, or better?" This is the dramatic, personalized, challenging approach. Dr. Fineberg proceeds to tell his four stories, and in each case what is done seems just as good as anything I could think up and probably better, but—and this is the point—nowhere near good enough to achieve the stunning success that he describes. So far as style is concerned, Dr. Fineberg's model is obviously Dale Carnegie's *How to Make Friends and Influence People*. "This is how you do it," he says in effect, "and to prove it, I will tell you a story." But the stories aren't quite convincing.

Dr. Fineberg is serious, and he is experienced, and he is more tentative and less pretentious than the comparison with Dale Carnegie would suggest, but it does seem to me that he operates on a resolutely simplified view of human behavior. To take one specific example, he describes the members of hate organizations as neurotics and also as "derelicts" and "within the lunatic fringe." The point he makes, that such persons need psychiatric treatment and cannot be reached by ordinary methods, is probably valid, but he draws the line between normal and abnormal with uncomfortable sharpness. The same superficiality appears in his discussion of the victims of prejudice who come to distrust themselves and the group to which they belong. "The self-doubter," he writes, "can best be helped to a wholesome, normal frame of mind by being shown the brighter side of intergroup relationships and especially more pleasant aspects of the relationship of other groups to his own." "Look for the silver lining" may be wholesome advice, but it is not the kind of prescription that suggests a profound diagnosis.

I MIGHT properly be asked, and I have kept asking myself, "What more can you demand of such a book as this? After all, it is a handbook. It is a book that tells people what to do in concrete situations. You have no right to expect Dr. Fineberg to offer an analysis of the nature of contemporary society or a treatise on the dilemma of modern man. The distinctions he makes are adequate for his purposes. He has found certain methods for combatting intolerance that work. They may not work so well as he thinks, but they are almost certainly preferable to the hasty reactions of men and women without experience in such matters. Hasn't he done what he tried to do just as well as it could possibly be done?"

Very possibly he has, but even at that, one still has one's doubts. "Inspired rumors and vicious propaganda can be combatted successfully," Dr. Fineberg writes, "but it takes a great deal of know-how—too often more than most of us have." "Know-how" is a term that troubles me in this context. One of Dr. Fineberg's stories concerns a family of Polish origin. Horrified when she learned that the children's playmates had referred to the father as a "hunky," the mother "rightly chose not to 'do something' but

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rather to do the *best* thing possible," and she consulted a teacher whom she had heard discussing race relations. Dr. Fineberg's account of what happened when the Polish woman adopted the teacher's suggestion for achieving "social acceptance" is one of the stories that I cannot swallow. What I want to call attention to here, however, is his assumption that everything depended on the adoption of a particular device.

I resist the idea that techniques can be of primary importance in human relationships. I have always distrusted courses in pedagogy, not because I think that teaching methods cannot be taught but because the emphasis on method so often excludes considerations that seem to me more important, because "know-how" so often becomes a substitute for knowledge and even for character. I am dubious about the experts in group discussion who believe that they have found the smooth, straight path to harmony and peace. I think the specialists in community relations are least effective when they rely heavily on technical devices.

It used to be believed, by persons the experts doubtless regard as old-fashioned and hopelessly ignorant, that a man of good will made his influence felt by being what he was. To convince other people, he relied on example and on rational argument. His relations with others didn't have to be thought about; they grew out of his character. If he could be sure that his will was good, the expression of goodness would take care of itself.

I COULD tell stories, as good as any of Dr. Fineberg's, about men and women, some members of minorities and some not, who have exerted a powerful influence against intolerance without a semblance of "know-how." I admit, however, that the question of techniques cannot be brushed aside in so impersonal a society as ours. The kind of influence I have been talking about operated almost entirely in face-to-face relationships, and such relationships play a less and less important part in contemporary life. Because the degree of interdependence in modern society constantly increases, the effects of intolerance become of more general concern, but at the same time the opportunities for direct, personal confrontation of the intolerant diminish.

It should also be pointed out that the man of good will I have been postulating is obviously what David Riesman would call an "inner-directed" type. His character is formed; for good and for evil, he really is what he is. In our society, however, with the decline of the great religious and ethical systems and with the growing impersonality of our life, more and more people seek to develop whatever values there seems to be a market for. This marketing orientation, as Erich Fromm calls it, makes it impossible to talk about a man's exerting an influence by being what he is, since what he is is determined, more or less from moment to moment, by the situation in which he finds himself.

As Fromm says, the marketing orientation and manipulation go hand in hand. The marketer seeks to manipulate himself and others, and he is easily manipulated. Here, then, is the inevitable field for the techniques of social relationships. Mostly they have been used for purposes of exploitation, and that is why one cannot help but distrust them. Yet the question remains whether good will can be made genuinely effective in our kind of society unless it avails itself of whatever skills have been developed.

I am not sure of the answer to that question, but it is clear to me that, if "know-how" has a certain value, it must nevertheless be kept in its place. What this means in the present instance is that Dr. Fineberg might have written a better book if he had been willing to make modest claims, not only for his methods but for methods in general. It would have been a better book and a briefer one.

Heine's Jewish Education

JUDAIC LORE IN HEINE. By ISRAEL TABAK. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press. 338 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by DAVID DAICHES

WE HAVE long waited for an adequately equipped scholar to investigate Heine's knowledge of Jewish traditions and Hebrew literature. The remarks on the subject made in standard books about, and editions of, Heine are so palpably erroneous that the inadequacy of their authors to deal with the matter is at once made manifest. (I had occasion the other week to consult a popular college edition of selections from Heine's prose, and found the most absurd annotations to *Der Rabbi von Bacherach*: the Passover Hagada, for example, was explained as meaning the Hagadic portions of

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the Talmud.) Dr. Tabak's study is therefore to be warmly welcomed: he knows what he is talking about, and he demonstrates conclusively that Heine had a more thorough Jewish education and a better knowledge of Jewish literature, history, and traditions, than he is generally given credit for. Of especial interest is Dr. Tabak's full account of Heine's association with the Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft der Juden, and of the influence of that association on his later thought. From his early association with the Verein through his later contacts with Jewish scholars, his use of themes and phrases from the Bible, his familiarity with Jewish ceremonial and figures from Jewish history, his use and recognition of Hebrew phrases, Heine's Jewish heritage is thoroughly documented, and documented by one who is able to recognize the evidence when he sees it.

THE recognition of the evidence is not as easy as it may seem. There are many references in Heine's poems which indicate that he was familiar with such intimate aspects of Jewish religious life as the names of the signs indicating how the Torah and the Haftoroth are to be chanted. In *Jehuda ben Halevy* occur the lines

Und er schlug dabei den Triller,
Den Schalscheleth, wie ein Vogel.

This reference—clear to anybody who has been taught as a child how to read *maftir*—is missed even by Louis Untermeyer, who in his book on Heine solemnly explained: "The Shalsheleth: a chain of associated names, as in a genealogy; a chanted list of prophets, kings, etc."—which proves very nicely how a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing. For Mr. Untermeyer had dug up a very different kind of *shalsheleth,* and certainly not the one that applies here. The *shalsheleth* referred to by Heine is one of the more complicated of the musical phrases employed in chanting the Law or the Prophets, and as a matter of fact a relatively uncommon one. It is a kind of trill, and Heine's description of it is very apt. Now this is a kind of knowledge that one cannot get by going to a library and pulling out a work of reference. If you have had a sound Jewish education in your youth, you know it; if you have not, you will never know it. This slight piece of evidence is therefore of great significance: it demonstrates the intimate nature of Heine's Jewish knowledge. And this is the kind of evidence that Dr. Tabak is equipped to recognize, as previous commentators on Heine were not.

Dr. Tabak is better at demonstrating the significance of details of expression in Heine's works than in handling what he takes to be more obvious proofs of Heine's Jewish knowledge. For example, he cites from a letter of Heine's a reference to Pharisees and Sadducees and infers from it Heine's "general knowledge of the difference between these two sects, and of the points of view which distinguished them." In fact, however, the remarks about the two sects which Heine here makes represent precisely the common Christian view of the difference between them, and not the Jewish view at all. The view that the Pharisees were narrow adherers to the strict letter of the law while avoiding the spirit (which is the view expressed by Heine) is not Jewish: it early became the standard Christian view as a result of the New Testament attitude, and remains so in spite of the brilliant and sympathetic work on the Pharisees done by the English scholar R. Travers Herford. Dr. Tabak remarks in a footnote that Heine's view of the Pharisees was inaccurate, but he does not seem to realize that this invalidates the evidence.

Again, in the *Prinzessin Sabbat* Heine refers to the Friday night hymn, *"Lecho Daudi,"* as having been written by Judah Halevi, whereas, as Dr. Tabak reminds us, it was really written by Solomon Alcabez. This is a pardonable error, and does not outweigh the evidence of Heine's knowledge of the poem. But Dr. Tabak might have noted that the first name of the author of the hymn is indicated by an acrostic formed by the initial letters of each verse, so that the reader cannot help seeing the author's name as he reads (in all *siddurim* of the period that I have seen, the initial letter of each verse is printed in extra large type, so that the name stands out clearly). Thus Heine's mistake about the author of *"Lecho Daudi"* shows that he had no visual image of the text of the poem before him as he wrote, that he had forgotten how it looked on the page. And that helps to reinforce the conclusion that Heine's knowledge of Jewish ritual and liturgy depended on fading early memories, while his knowledge of Jewish history, of some aspects of Hebrew literature, and of the Bible, was reinforced by subsequent reading. This distinction, however, is not made clear by Dr. Tabak.

But in spite of occasional lack of perspective, some repetitiousness, and a certain capriciousness

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in the method of presenting the material, this is an important and a valuable book, which no serious student of Heine would want to ignore. It documents carefully and conclusively the view of Heine's relation to Jewish knowledge that Dr. Tabak expresses in his conclusion: "From his early days in Berlin, where he associated with the men who founded the Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft des Judentums [*sic:* should not this be *"der Juden"*?] to his last years in Paris, Jewish learning has held an honorable place in his opinion among the cultural movements of the nations. He studied its history and many of its literary monuments, and always regarded them as significant. He considered them part of a high civilization capable of participating in European thought and literature." That is the real point: Heine saw Jewish thought as a part of the Western tradition, and concentrated on those aspects of it which could best be absorbed by that tradition. In doing so, he unconsciously posed the kind of problem that contributors to COMMENTARY have been concerning themselves with during the last few months.

Dandy in Shirt-Sleeves

A MENCKEN CHRESTOMATHY. By H. L. MENCKEN. Knopf. 626 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by RAYMOND ROSENTHAL

H. L. MENCKEN is a self-made eccentric, as some people are self-made auto mechanics or movie writers. Whatever charm he has is due to this air of purposive crankiness. Here, one feels, is a man of the most eminent common sense who has decided, for professional reasons, to act the crackpot. In a country where the great writers are all great natural eccentrics and village queers—Melville, Poe, Hawthorne, the names prove the point—the writer who comes by his solitary strangeness through resolution and training must fall almost automatically into a lesser category; the sweat of concocting effort, of an arduously engaged-in spiritual homework, cannot fail to give away his pose.

But still an eccentric. This man who has the appearance of an alert bartender in a fashionable hotel, who gives the impression of dandyish clothes, flamboyant shirts—and yet who writes as though those very same shirt-sleeves were eternally rolled up and those carefully tended hands forever lubricated—imagines himself some sort of aristocrat infinitely aloof from the "boobs"! Of course, his lordly invective is not aimed at *us;* on the contrary, his very stentorian tone incongruously implies the most cozy kind of intimacy with *us.* It is the peculiarly American kind of intimacy achieved by shouting at the top of one's lungs.

And yet, at one precarious moment in our country's cultural history, from about the close of the First World War to the end of the Harding administration, it was this American eccentric, or rather half-eccentric, who, almost single-handed, carried on the valuable critical function of beating America over the head with Europe. The Randolph Bourne generation had either died or fled to the *Dome,* and the coming crop of critics, the Edmund Wilson-Paul Rosenfeld generation, were still striving towards authority. H. L. Mencken was, for better or worse, the defender on American soil of the

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values represented by Beethoven, Conrad, Wagner, Ibsen, and George Bernard Shaw. And he did quite well at the job, filling in the gap until better-trained, though perhaps not as spirited, assault troops were ready to take over.

If you look up the files of the magazine *Smart Set,* there you will discover lusty and humorous evidence of H. L. Mencken's heroic stand. But not in *this* new collection of his out-of-print writings. Although he had a free field of his past work to choose from, Mencken has incomprehensibly given his best pieces the go-by—for instance, the articles on Theodore Dreiser and James Huneker and the satiric squib entitled "Want Ad," which attacks the Genteel Tradition—and has shown a sad predilection for the decidedly second-rate in his own canon. This, as much as anything else, is eloquent of the decline and fall that has visited his later days.

But in his best days, when he was at the top of his skill, Mencken provided us with a type of intramural intellectual journalism which is too often either over-estimated or dismissed. If taken at its true worth as a species of reasonably well-informed opinion service for the benefit of the culture-hungry, it will be much easier to deal with. Thus, one can say that Mencken in his own way did for America what George Bernard Shaw and Jean-Paul Sartre have done in their capacities as cultural journalists for England and France; that is, he applied the ideas of other, more profound men to the current situation in life and letters, giving these views widespread dissemination through the medium of an energetic, colorfully fetching style. Of course, ideas thus appropriated and applied must inevitably suffer in the course of wider distribution—unlike such varied materials as automobiles, canned goods, and people, ideas have shown a malicious recalcitrance to mass production methods. Yet enough of their original flash remains to lend an aspect of liveliness to the enterprise.

So at this late date, and especially since Mencken himself has retired from active service, leaving his practice in lesser hands, examination of his work becomes the appraisal of a tendency in "popular culture." No exhausting and exhaustive sociological research is needed, however. All one has to do is to read the current issues of *Life* and the *New Yorker* to come upon the assimilated but still visible traces of his impact. A style of mocking grandiloquence, a cynicism that knows itself too well, an overt or disguised assumption of cultural superiority on the part of the writer, a breezy, seemingly intimate acquaintance with the *names* of modern culture going hand in hand with a half-conscious hatred of what those very names stand for—each of these traits can be traced back to the originating Mencken swank.

For swank, in both cultural and social matters, is what Mencken affected most of all. His patent of aristocracy derived from a mysterious complex of circumstances: that he had read Nietzsche in his youth, that he could tell the difference between various vintages of Rhine wines, that he had no use for morality—which he curiously associated with the "boobs"—that he was conversant with and resigned to the pessimistic variety of the "facts of life." But there was nothing in all this that could be considered really personal to Mencken: about ten or fifteen years ago one could walk into the city room of any fair-sized newspaper and find some aged and embittered reporter with exactly such a notion of himself. But just as Wyndham Lewis quite rightly said that if one could get an ox to talk he would talk like Ernest Hemingway—all life seen on the dead-level of sensation and things happening to you—so the artistic miracle of getting an embittered reporter to talk, to talk in his own strangely rakish tongue, has been accomplished through H. L. Mencken. To be sure, a reporter can't possibly expect to be as artistic as an ox, for where the ox is engrossed in sensuous fact the reporter must make do with simulacra, artifacts.

Even H. L. Mencken's quixotic development comes clearer in the light of his journalistic proclivities. His mind was subjected to two distinct intellectual shocks: grazed by Nietzsche, transfixed by James Huneker. Grazed because, after all, Nietzsche was only a book, not a personage. But transfixed by the living flesh of a critical *Kappelmeister* and king-pin: James Huneker ensconced behind his Lager at Luchow's. (At last! a newspaperman who referred familiarly to Strindberg and Berlioz instead of Teddy Roosevelt and Billy Sunday!) Indeed, Mencken's crude Nietzscheanism sounds like something acquired at second hand—by gossiping with Huneker himself; the sketchy outline of thought that one picks up in the intermittences of a rowdy café conversation.

But the conglomerate influence, Huneker-Nietzsche, gave Mencken one marked advan-

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tage over all subsequent American critics: it gave him an Enemy. And if one regards the critical task as that of isolating and marking out the Enemy, holding him up to ridicule and harrying him with invective, then H. L. Mencken is a successful critic. He certainly never had any doubts concerning the identity and whereabouts of his targets: in all their evanescent forms and characters—from reforming politicians and blue-nose teetotalers to phony evangelists and censorship hounds—he tracked the Philistines down and bombarded them with untiring comic zest. His foe was ultimately a contrived, composite figure, the "mob-man" of democracy, recently freed from the salutary constraints of a hierarchical social system and on a rampage of unmatchable *gaucherie*. Unfailingly disgusted and entranced by the spectacle, Mencken brought to his job the creative élan of a comic artist. Taking the dispersed and flaccid material afforded by everyday life in a democracy, he pounded and banged and pummeled it into greatly exaggerated and therefore thoroughly recognizable shapes. It is this feat of exuberant and joyous exaggeration that connects Mencken, however remotely, with the most gifted of comic writers. Moreover, the fact that his long list of foes was made flauntingly recognizable, when they were not openly named and then assaulted, was valuable: the recipients of the dead cats and rotten tomatoes of Mencken's scattering but often deadly rhetorical fire could not avoid recognizing themselves; they were, in short, made self-conscious —an advance over the undisturbedly pure state of unconsciousness that had somehow prevailed before Mencken's eruption on the scene.

The Fond Biographer

THE WORLD OF EMMA LAZARUS. By H. E. JACOB. Shocken Books. 222 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by MARVIN MEYERS

BY A miscalculation of a century, history has given Emma Lazarus an avuncular biographer who was obviously designed to be her real uncle. The gentle pressure on Emma's hand in difficult moments, the stern rebuke for those who mislead her, the advice on family affairs, the undeviating vision of Bedloe Island and immortality—Mr. Jacob aches to serve the living Emma. Indeed, one almost begins to feel that perhaps H. E. Jacob is *not* (as the book jacket claims) the contemporary author of twenty-five works available in twelve languages (including such improbable titles as *Six Thousand Years of Bread, Joseph Haydn: His Times, Art and Glory, Blood and Celluloid,* and *Jacqueline and the Japanese*). Isn't it some long-departed intimate of the Lazarus breakfast table toying with us when he asks disarmingly, "Where are Emma's diaries?"

Do not dismiss the theory too lightly. Observe, for instance, the familiarity with this critical episode of Emma's childhood. Where, she asks her father, did our family come from?

"'From Portugal,' he says briefly. . . . But why are they no longer in Portugal, Emma asks, her eyes alight with eagerness to know. . . . They were persecuted, Moses Lazarus answers hesitantly.

"'Why per-persecuted?'

"'Because they were Jews.'

"'What does it mean, persecuted. . . .'"

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And so on. Even if a sympathetic modern writer could fabricate such dialogue, down to the childish stumbling over a difficult word, could he fathom her most secret thoughts, her dreams?—"But Emma had stopped listening. A fearful insight had suddenly shaken her to the depths of her soul. If sugar actually had such a vast history, then no doubt everything had a history of its own. The milk brought to the table, the cow it was taken from. . . . Mother's silk dress, the cretonne of the curtains, the silver the spoons were made of. . . . Everything was in motion, everything was rushing up out of the past ages . . . toward Emma Lazarus. . . .

"It was too much for her. She uttered a low cry. Her parents saw that she had a fever and put her to bed. In her dream she was the Queen of Portugal and lived in a white palace of granular marble that was really sugar."

But it must be admitted, at last, that Mr. H. E. Jacob *is* a current author, for no Victorian uncle was so wise in the things "we now know in the light of modern psychology." He tags her difficulty at the start—chronic father-fixation; and he must follow the train of consequences to the end: spinsterhood, hero worship of Mr. Emerson, the spoiling of her play, *The Spagnoletto*. We have Mr. Jacob to instruct us, but who was there to tell "this girl of seven . . . that her parents were harming her with the love they bore her"? Who was there to tell her father that "his obscure satisfaction in keeping Emma out of the community of school life was an essentially un-American trait in him . . ., something related to the Oriental's desire to keep his wife shut up in the house"? A woman of twenty-seven who had "experienced nothing but her own verses and the father-god in her family" plainly needed help, and Mr. Jacob knows the sadness of arriving a century too late.

Judaism and humanitarianism struck Miss Lazarus at the same moment—August 1881—and saved her from frustration as a woman and an artist. Mr. Jacob guides her through one brief phase of backsliding—a Sephardic-aristocratic deviation—and we have the mature Emma Lazarus, writer of the *Songs of a Semite* and a handful of essays on the Jewish question. As a critic of poetry Mr. Jacob makes only modest claims and small gestures, and I am not sure that he, any more than I, would separate Emma Lazarus from that weak company of 19th-century American poets who without malice turned their hands to making English poetry a dead language. Whatever the depths of her Hebraic culture (Mr. Jacob alludes to a considerable mastery of the language and literature), Miss Lazarus in this volume figures mainly in the politics of Jewish defense. She would appear to have given dignified answers to the anti-Semites, rather cogent in prose and nondescript in verse.

Her biographer, however, already has caught the scent of immortality and hastens her, with her "New Colossus" sonnet, to the statue on Bedloe Island. Full of man's vain confidence in building materials, Mr. Jacob bids farewell: "But what, after all, is a name? Names molder in libraries or wither in anthologies. Emma's name will not vanish so long as Liberty's statue stands; it is indissolubly joined with the mighty colossus on which her verses are graven."

Book Reviewers in this Issue

Nathan Glick has contributed reviews to Commentary, the *Nation*, the *Progressive*, and other magazines.

Irwin Ross is a free-lance writer whose book, *Strategy for Liberals*, was recently published by Harper.

Granville Hicks is well known as essayist and literary critic. His book *Small Town* is a report on the social organization and ways of life of a New York community.

David Daiches is a professor of English and chairman of the division of literature at Cornell University. His most recent book of criticism is *A Study of Literature for Readers and Critics*.

Raymond Rosenthal has in the past contributed articles and reviews to Commentary. He is at present working on a novel.

Marvin Meyers is an instructor in the social sciences at the College of the University of Chicago.

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